

ROUTLEDGE WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY

# ANCIENT SOUTHEAST ASIA

JOHN N. MIKSIC AND GEOK YIAN GOH

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# ANCIENT SOUTHEAST ASIA

*Ancient Southeast Asia* provides readers with a much-needed synthesis of the latest discoveries and research in the archaeology of the region, presenting the evolution of complex societies in Southeast Asia from the protohistoric period, beginning around 500 BC, to the arrival of British and Dutch colonists in 1600. Well-illustrated throughout, this comprehensive account explores the factors which established Southeast Asia as a region of unique cultural fusion. Miksic and Goh explore how the local population exploited the abundant resources available, developing maritime transport routes which resulted in economic and cultural wealth, including some of the most elaborate art styles and monumental complexes ever constructed.

The book's broad geographical and temporal coverage, including a chapter on the natural environment, provides readers with the context needed to understand this staggeringly diverse region. It utilizes French, Dutch, Chinese, Malay-Indonesian, and Burmese sources and synthesizes interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives and data from archaeology, history, and art history. Offering key opportunities for comparative research with other centers of early socioeconomic complexity, *Ancient Southeast Asia* establishes the region's importance in world history.

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# A NOTE ON SPELLING

It was tempting to use completely phonetic spelling for this book, but this would make it difficult for users already familiar with traditional spelling conventions to locate some words. Therefore it has been decided to adopt common spellings already in use, although in some instances choices had to be made when there is inconsistency in previous works.

In order to retain consistency with local practice, Sanskrit words and names are transliterated according to spelling conventions used in contemporary English-language sources. Diacritics are given the first time the word appears, but without diacritics thereafter. The letter ś as in Śiva is transliterated as *ś*. The ṣ as in Visnu is transliterated as *s*.

Indonesian authors often spell words of Sanskrit origin phonetically according to their pronunciation in Java. Thus the labial semi-vowel often transliterated as *v* in India is transliterated as *w*, for example in Bhairawa, Pandawa, and Rawana. Siva and Visnu are written using the *v* instead, since more readers are familiar with these Anglicized spellings. It is impossible to reconstruct early Malay pronunciation, since inscriptions of the seventh and eighth centuries use the letter usually read as the Sanskrit *v* for both *b* and *w*. In Cambodian entries, however, in conformity with common practice the *v* is retained, as in *varman*.

The sound normally spelled *ch* in English is written simply as *c* in modern Indonesian and Sanskrit. Thus *candi* is pronounced “chandi”.

The sound written in some transcriptions of Sanskrit as *ṃ* and pronounced as *ng* (as in *sing*) is often misrepresented in English as *m*. This confusion has been rectified in all spellings in this book, even though this results in some spellings which differ from normal usage.

In modern Indonesian the English *sh* sound is written *sy*. The English spelling will be used here.

The letter ṛ is transliterated as *er* when it appears in the middle of a word, for example in Kertarajasa, but as *ri* in the word *risi*.

The most difficult decision concerned the transliteration of the character ṅ which symbolizes pronunciation commonly encountered in some but not all parts of central and eastern Java. Indonesian practice varies on this point. It has been decided to spell these words with a *rather* than *o*, for example **Singasari** instead of **Singosari**. In some cases, alternative spellings including diacritics are given.

The abbreviations CE and BCE (Common Era and Before Common Era) are used in preference to AD and BC.

# INTRODUCTION

## History, culture, and art in Seasia

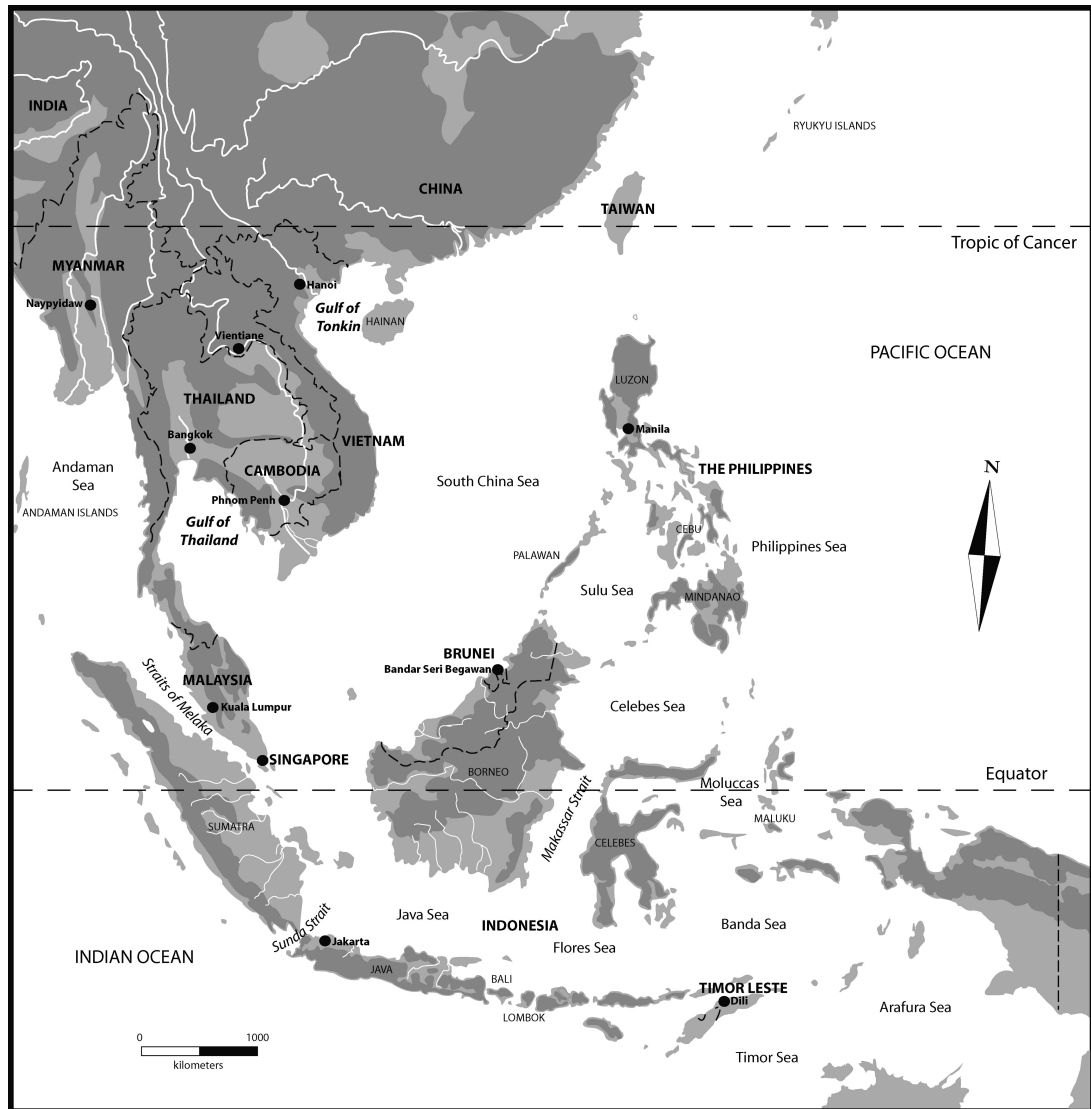
### DEFINING SEASIA

There is no easy way to decide where Southeast Asia (Seasia) begins or ends. From a Chinese perspective, Seasia is part of the *nanyang*, “South Seas”. Ancient Indian sources called it *Suvarnadvipa*, “Golden Island” and *Suvarnabhumi*, “Golden Land”. The Greek cosmographer Klaudios Ptolemaios, residing in Egypt, knew the locations of India *Extra Gangem Fluvium* (“India beyond the Ganges”) and the *Aurea Khersonesos* (“Golden Peninsula”; the Siam-Malay Peninsula).

Seasians do not seem to have had a word for their region, and even today nobody identifies themselves as Seasians. This does not mean, however, that Seasia is not a legitimate unit for historical or cultural analysis. Just because it has not been recognized as one does not mean it should not be one. As knowledge of the region’s cultural history expands, it is becoming clear that being a Seasian means more than not being Indian or Chinese. Our knowledge of premodern “Seasia” is only now reaching the critical point needed to calculate the ratio between diversity and commonality.

The common definition of Seasia is political: 11 countries (Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Brunei, Indonesia, and Timor Leste; Figure 1.1). The borders of these nations are rather arbitrary accidents of recent history. If we chose linguistic, cultural, archaeological, or environmental criteria instead, Seasia would include large sections of India, China, and Taiwan. The Association of Seasian Institutes of Higher Learning formed in the 1950s included the University of Hong Kong.<sup>1</sup>

Using the smallest of these frames, political boundaries, Seasia comprises about 4.5 million square kilometers, or 3 per cent of the earth’s surface (5,600 km east to west, 3,300 km north to south). Seasia’s population of 600 million as of 2008 was 11.4 per cent of the world’s total, disproportionately large for its area.



**Figure 1.1** Political borders of Seasia

## SEASIAN DEMOGRAPHY

In 1800 Seasia's population was roughly 30 million.<sup>2</sup> In 1900 the region had 80 million people, of whom a third lived in Java.<sup>3</sup> In 1950 Seasians comprised 7.2 per cent of the world's population; thus growth in this region has been exceptionally fast during the past 60 years.<sup>4</sup> Seasia's population of 618 million in 2013<sup>5</sup> was larger than that of Europe or North America. The region's GDP in 2011 was \$2.158 trillion (\$3,538 per capita<sup>6</sup>), more than that of India.<sup>7</sup>

## COMPARISON BY SIZE OF LAND AREA

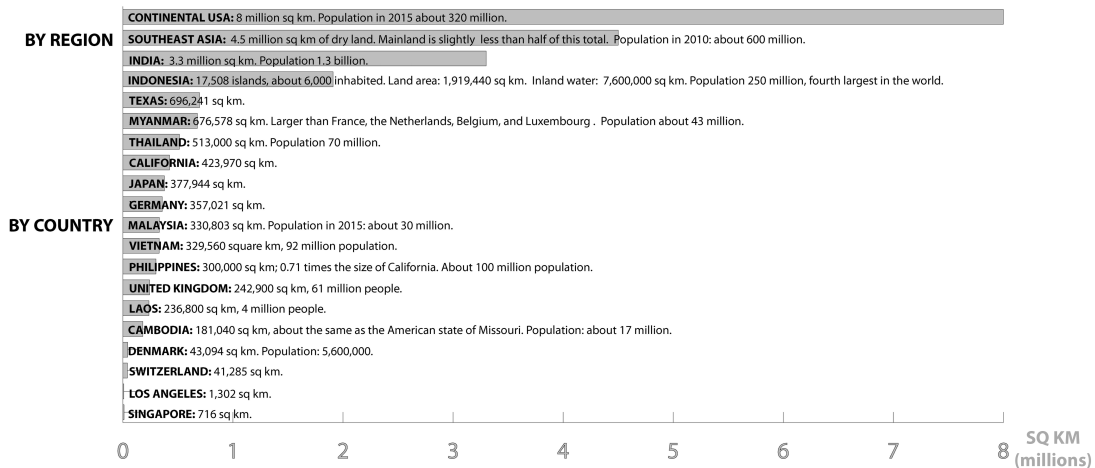


Table 1.1 Comparisons by size of land area: Seasia and selected other regions

It is difficult to understand why population did not grow faster in premodern Seasia, or why it has exploded in the modern period. Two general factors may have been at work. One was natural: a high rate of mortality from diseases which thrive in hot climates, such as malaria and intestinal parasites.<sup>8</sup> Another may have been cultural: a tendency to marry relatively late. Many traditional Seasian societies required prospective grooms to pay high bride prices, which had the effect of delaying marriage. Warfare was rare in Seasia; men were only conscripted in time of need. It is possible that certain areas were depopulated as a result of raids aimed at capturing people.<sup>9</sup> When kingdoms formed, the objective of making war was often to capture people and bring them to another king's lands to work for him, rather than to kill the enemy and seize their land. Much of Seasia's population was concentrated in cities by the sixteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Urban patterns of life and architecture were quite different from those in other parts of the world, but little archaeological research aimed at recovering them has been conducted.

Seasia is also interesting because its history has been directly correlated with much of the world for 2,000 years, but its societies evolved in different directions from the rest of the world. Seasia has never been politically unified. Its population speaks hundreds of languages belonging to five major families. This diversity makes it difficult for scholars to decide how to define Seasia. Indeed, some scholars have sought to convert this difficulty into a virtue by identifying diversity as one of the unifying traits of Seasia.

## A REGION IN SEARCH OF A NAME AND AN IDENTITY

Between the 1850s and 1950s, most of Seasia was divided among European colonial powers. From the French perspective, Seasia was part of the Extrême-Orient, the "Far East", including India, China, and Japan. Vietnam's past was perceived as a minor branch of Chinese history; the rest of the region was



seen as a peripheral part of India. When the great historian George Coedès needed a title for a book about ancient Seasia, he chose *Les états hindouisés d'Extrême-Orient*. *Hindouisés*, literally “Hinduised”, was translated as “Indianized” in English. The Dutch scholar N.J. Krom titled his book on the art history of ancient Indonesia *Geschiedenis van Hindu-Javaansche Kunst*, “History of Hindu-Javanese Art”. The use of “Hindu” for these books may seem inaccurate since Buddhism also played an important role in Seasia, including Indonesia, but it may perhaps be excused since the name “India” in English is cognate with “Hindu”.

The name “Indochina” used by the French for their territories in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia reflects this attitude. Indochina once referred to the area from Burma to Hong Kong.<sup>11</sup> The modern name for Indonesia can be construed as meaning “Islands of India”. It is not very different from the colonial name by which the archipelago was known: the Netherlands East Indies. Paul Wheatley’s 1983 survey of urbanization in Seasia, *Negara and Commandery*, advances the thesis that Seasian cities evolved as the result of influence from India (symbolized by the Sanskrit word *negara*) or China (the word “commandery” evokes ancient Chinese military colonization of northern Vietnam, which they called Annam, the “Pacified South”).

It is commonly stated that the term “Seasia” only emerged during World War II as a designation for a theatre of military operations. This is not quite true; analogous terms were used in the late nineteenth century, but the idea that this region is or could be a unit suitable for cultural-historical analysis on a par with Europe, or East Asia, or South Asia, only appeared in academia in the 1950s.

The historian O.W. Wolters wrote an excellent survey of the problems associated with the attempt to identify traits which unify Seasia as a cultural-historical unit; in the process he challenged assumptions about the subject of regions in general.<sup>12</sup> Europe has long been accepted as a viable unit of study. Even though Europe like Seasia has never been politically or culturally unified, historians and geographers have identified themes such as the spread of Latin language, Christianity, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Enlightenment, which influenced the historical and cultural evolution of the continent. Wolters asked whether any analogous themes can serve the same function of turning Seasia into a unit about which it is possible to generalize. He advanced a number of potential themes for discussion, including a common “cultural matrix”, the *mandala* concept of relations among competing rulers, and cultural diversity. In the conclusion to his first edition of his *History, Culture, and Region in Seasian Perspective*, he suggested that scholars should “keep as close as possible to the subregional sources . . . and forgo efforts for the time being to delineate a shape to regional history.”<sup>13</sup> In 1999 he modified this list by adding heterarchy as a regional characteristic of Seasia.<sup>14</sup> Wolters also acknowledged that not all Seasian subregions were permanent; discontinuities arose when some kingdoms and ethnic groups disappeared.<sup>15</sup> He never did pronounce a final conclusion on the subject of whether Seasia is a valid unit for historical analysis.

It has been said that the one great theme of Chinese history is unity; India, continuity.<sup>16</sup> Possibly Seasia’s one great theme could be diversity, but this is not intellectually satisfying to all. Somewhat controversially, Wolters rejected the sea as a theme, arguing that not all parts of Seasia were equally affected by it. This does not seem valid. Even highland populations far from the sea or navigable rivers were affected by trade in forest products and minerals from the hinterlands, and overland communication routes. Highlanders and lowlanders needed each other’s products for subsistence. Salt, for example,

is not found in many parts of the highlands and had to be imported from the coast. Salt sources found in hinterland areas such as Khorat provided the stimulus for a major trade network in late prehistory.

By 5,000 years ago, certain groups had evolved sufficiently efficient specialized adaptations to local environments that it became beneficial to stay in one area or ecological niche and depend on exchanges with neighbours occupying similarly specialized niches to provide necessary complementary resources rather than travelling long distances to acquire all their requirements. A kind of symbiosis between different groups evolved. One pattern which evolved during the 3,000 years before Seasian history started was that between highlanders, lowlanders, and those who lived by gathering sea products. The process by which this three-way symbiotic relationship evolved probably resembled the Mesoamerican system which united the Mayan lowlands and the highlands.<sup>17</sup> The Seasian region is much larger and more geographically complex than Mesoamerica (where seaborne trade was apparently limited to coastal canoes), but these two tropical regions separated by the Pacific Ocean display striking similarities in highland-lowland relations, resource distributions, and ritual exchange systems. Lowland rulers seldom succeeded in exercising control over highlanders; instead of sticks, they had to offer carrots to attract them to engage in exchanges.

Some Seasians never adopted the habit of living in permanent villages. Nomadic ways of life still persist in the twenty-first century, both on land and on water, although these groups are rapidly shrinking, both because of political pressure and the desires of their members to obtain the benefits of permanent abodes. In Seasia one can still observe analogues of various phases of the evolution of human modes of subsistence, from hunting and gathering to dense urbanization. No groups represent surviving “Stone Age” cultures, contrary to what some have written about the Tasaday of the Philippines.<sup>18</sup> No group in Seasia is economically self-sufficient. The importance of economic exchanges and interdependency has been one of the strongest influences which have shaped Seasian society and history.

Seasians developed several ways of organizing exchange relationships. Temples (or “ceremonial centers” in P. Wheatley’s formula) and palaces were centers of exchange networks of considerable size and complexity, in addition to markets. Within religious, political, and economic exchange networks or “interaction spheres” there were several subcategories of economic activity. Palaces, temples, and markets interacted with one another in very complicated ways (see “A framework for analysis of Classic Seasia”, this chapter).

To give one example of the complex nature of exchange systems which linked societies on different levels of sociopolitical organization, in South Sumatra the rulers of a lowland polity which traced its origins to the seventh century were personally linked to people who lived in highlands by a relationship in which the lowland rulers were customarily responsible for providing the highlanders with three basic necessities: iron, salt, and cloth. The highlanders were obligated by custom to provide the lowlanders with luxury items such as ivory, gold, and resin used for incense. The lowland rulers kept some of the highland luxury goods for themselves, redistributed some of them to reward faithful subjects, and exchanged some of them with foreign groups through another system of ceremonial exchanges known as “tribute trade”.<sup>19</sup>

Ruth T. McVey insisted that there is a need for “Locating Southeast Asia”: “It is precisely in the context of the new emphasis on globalisation, networking, and process that Southeast Asia can best be understood, and where experience can make a significant contribution. Furthermore, she states:<sup>20</sup>

Southeast Asia reminds us as perhaps no other place does that human institutions, including nation-states, are social constructs and therefore ultimately polyvalent and fluid. We should look not for one Southeast Asia but many, viewed according to their times and the groups that participate in them. What counts . . . is the need to identify relative densities of interaction among these elements.

## THEORY IN SEASIAN HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

This book deals with the historical archaeology of Seasia. The term “historical archaeology” literally should mean the archaeology of literate cultures, but it has come to have several meanings. In North America, it is often understood to denote “the archaeology of the spread of European culture throughout the world since the fifteenth century and its impact on indigenous peoples”.<sup>21</sup> Some reject this term because they feel it reflects an ethnocentric and limited perspective. A more neutral and internationally acceptable definition is “a multi- and interdisciplinary field that shares a special relationship with the formal disciplines of anthropology and history and seeks to understand the global nature of modern life”.<sup>22</sup> Those who apply this definition, however, emphasize the archaeology of the past 500 years rather than applying it to all literate cultures. Orser states that his concept of historical archaeology is meant to apply to “those that inhabited a time . . . broadly termed ‘modern times’”.<sup>23</sup>

Historical archaeology can be defined in several ways: as a method, and the formation of the modern world.<sup>24</sup> Some, such as Robert Schuyler,<sup>25</sup> use it literally to mean the period since the beginning of writing. Because writing began at different times in different places, historical archaeology starts at different dates. In Europe, historical archaeology can be divided into different subdisciplines. “Classical” archaeology would start with the Minoans, circa 3000 BCE, and continue until the fall of the later Roman Empire around 527 CE. “Medieval” archaeology would cover the period from this event until about 1400. The term “post-medieval archaeology” is used by those who study the period from about 1450 to 1750. These terms are valid only for certain geographical areas. In China, the term “historical archaeology” technically begins around 1600 BCE. Chinese archaeologists, however, use a different framework focused on imperial dynasties as markers of periods.

In Africa, the term “historical archaeology” has been resisted in recent times because it is believed by some that this division implies that preliterate societies were primitive. Alternative terms such as “Swahili archaeology”, which deals with the period beginning in the late first millennium CE, are used instead.<sup>26</sup> The term “historical archaeology” is not generally used in Seasia in either the limited North American sense or the broader sense of the study of the material culture of any literate society. There is something to be said for the use of the term “historical archaeology”; after all, we use the term “pre-historic archaeology” without a second thought. It is also necessary to acknowledge that archaeological research conducted during the historical period can test a wider range of hypotheses than prehistoric archaeology.

Unfortunately, in Asia the methodology of prehistoric archaeology is separated by a significant gulf from that applied to historic sites. In Thailand, for instance, until the 1960s archaeology was “royal art

history”.<sup>27</sup> In Korea and China, historical archaeologists perceive their task as the confirmation of written sources.<sup>28</sup> In Seasia, prehistorians record the provenance of each small find with great care in order to reconstruct as many aspects as possible of the adaptations and daily lives of people. Archaeologists who work on historic period sites in contrast mainly search for information which written sources have preconditioned them to expect. As in Korea and China, their objective is often to check written sources or to clarify the history of a monument rather than to question or supplement the written or architectural record with information about the many aspects of premodern human existence which were never recorded, at least not on permanent materials.

Prehistorians, of course, have one major advantage (if it may be called that) over historical archaeologists: they have comparatively few artifacts with which to work. Sites of the historic period normally generate unmanageable amounts of data, so that historical archaeologists are compelled to be selective in the data they collect. The problem of storing large quantities of artifacts is so intractable that the practice of reburial has begun to generate its own methods. This explains but does not excuse the lack of attention to details of daily life which characterizes much historical archaeology in Seasia.

Fortunately, this indictment is less valid than it was in 1990. This book on the historical archaeology of Seasia is inevitably biased toward the concerns of the elite, since that is the major type of data which has been collected so far. Every effort has been made to counterbalance this tendency, but it cannot be completely avoided because of the nature of the data available in 2015. It is fervently hoped that a different survey of Seasian historical archaeology can be written in the not too distant future.

Written sources are a guide to the archaeologist, but they are also data to be tested and verified rather than accepted uncritically. The same applies to statues and temples. They are indicators of one form of interaction sphere, encompassing elites who communicated with one another over an area stretching from Africa to Japan. This interaction sphere overlapped with numerous others, connected by religion, economics, occupation, kinship, and locality. Each of these spheres is delineated by artifact types, linked by what archaeologists call “style”. This term has a very specific meaning in archaeology: it means all attributes of an artifact which were intentionally created which are not directly related to the assumed function of the object.

The creation of typologies is one of the basic methods by which archaeologists organize data and test hypotheses. Despite the fundamental nature of this procedure, there is no consensus regarding the proper technique for formulating typologies of artifacts. No single typological system is suitable for all purposes. A museum curator may need to record different attributes of pottery than an archaeologist who wants to study the distribution pattern of sherds in different sites. Archaeologists often differ on the proper method for classifying artifacts even when the objective of the research is the same. Some archaeologists attempt to rediscover the traits which ancient potters had in mind when they were moulding pots. Others deny that such a goal is valid because we can never prove that our typology reflects the thoughts of ancient people. Some archaeologists (e.g., Lewis Binford) resent the notion of the “whispering potsherd”. It is the archaeologist’s job to impart meaning to the artifacts she or he finds, to speak for them.

Some archaeologists argue that since all meanings about the past are modern constructions, objectivity is impossible. Others counter with the argument that although perfect knowledge of the past is

impossible, we can calculate objectively the degree of confidence that we can assign to our conclusions. The more data we have which has been collected in a systematic manner, the greater the level of confidence we can have that our conclusions are accurate.

In Seasian historical archaeology, many data come from artifacts which were collected in a less than systematic manner. Many important statues and inscriptions were discovered by accident by farmers and construction workers. Some archaeologists refuse to utilize artifacts which have been bought and sold on the grounds that by studying them, the archaeologist is condoning looting and the intentional concealment of the true sources of art objects. This is a valid objection, but if all artifacts in museum collections obtained by purchase were ignored, Seasian historical archaeologists would be left with almost no data. Even in official excavations, important artifacts have been found by labourers when no archaeologist was present to record the precise context of the discoveries. As a result, the historical archaeologist in Seasia has to make it clear that the level of confidence one can assign to certain conclusions is low and will remain so unless and until similar artifacts are discovered in systematic excavations.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INTER-REGIONAL COMPARISONS

The inconsistent nature of methodology and terminology is a major obstacle to the creation of a discipline which can draw conclusions about the nature of worldwide cultural evolution rather than limiting itself to specific parts of the world and certain periods. Although this book is about Seasia, it seeks to relate the experiences of humans in this part of the world to the body of knowledge accumulated from other regions in order to use Seasian data to expand our knowledge of world archaeology.

As more non-Western people become archaeologists, there is a danger that they will fall into the trap of focusing on national or regional chronologies and cultural history which has snared so many Western scholars. This would be a major waste of an opportunity. Seasian archaeology holds enormous potential to test models of cultural evolution, because of the region's diverse ecology and high level of connectivity with other regions over a long period. This book is not a theoretical work, but it contains suggestions for future development of theory.

Existing models of the evolution of social complexity have major conceptual deficiencies.<sup>29</sup> They tend to have poorly defined hypotheses and assumptions, and lack testable hypotheses. Terms associated with social complexity are often used without definition. The main objective of this book is to summarize the rapidly expanding data on Seasian cultural history for the introductory-level student and general reader. The terminology used has been chosen with the objective of making the periods and categories of description easily comparable with other parts of the world.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LINKS BETWEEN SEASIA AND THE WORLD

Imagine what would have happened if seafarers from ancient Greece somehow were blown to Polynesia. What kind of hybrid culture would their descendants have created? How would classical Greek

ideals of harmony, proportion, and naturalistic representation have blended with Polynesian gods, materials, and ideals? How would this culture adapt to its environment?

These two cultures actually met in Seasia around 2,300 years ago. In the wake of Alexander the Great's conquest of northwestern India, Hellenic art styles became embedded in early Buddhist art and architecture. Around the same time, a script known as Aramaic from the eastern Mediterranean became the basis for the development of a script used in India. Meanwhile, sailors from Seasia were sailing across the Indian Ocean to Africa, and simultaneously exploring Polynesia. Thus the connection between the cultures of Greece and Polynesia was made.

The early centuries of this cultural encounter are shrouded in mystery and legend, but it is possible to reconstruct the effects of this meeting through archaeology and texts. Seasians spent 15 centuries appropriating cultural and artistic motifs from the shores of the Indian Ocean, and working out endless variations on themes which attracted them.

Seasian societies were not primitive when this contact began. Late prehistoric Seasia exhibited a range of stratification systems. Some were marked by highly differentiated hereditary social classes separated from one another by deep chasms, whereas in others it was much easier to move from lower to higher rungs of the ladder of status. Nowhere in Seasia did the South Asian notion of hereditary occupational castes take root, although the names of the three higher *varnas*, or twice-born castes (*brahmana*, *ksatriya*, *vaisya*), were sometimes used as honorary titles granted by rulers.

Major questions for future research include the causes and nature of the transition from the Preclassic era to the early Classic period. In the second or third century CE Seasians began to write. The earliest Seasian writers used a script imported from India, and the earliest inscriptions were written in Sanskrit language which also came from India. During the next few centuries Seasians began to build temples from bricks and stone, using Indian models. Hindu and Buddhist deities, also brought from India, were worshipped in those temples. At first their rituals were similar to those in India, but by the seventh century Seasians began to change the temples' designs, adapting them to local rituals. The changes were due to new ways of using symbols appropriated from India to express Seasian speculations about the relationship between humans and the supernatural.

Early historians and archaeologists from the West concluded that contact with India prodded Seasians to make a sudden leap forward, resulting from either local reactions to Indian princes who conquered Seasia, or the migration of Indian people who set up colonies here. Indians were credited with introducing not only writing, religion, and art, but also other important advances such as technology, organized government, and cities. No evidence of such an influx was found. Scholars then turned to more subtle explanations for the Indian face of early Seasian civilization such as immigrant traders, craftsmen, and Brahmanas.

Since the 1960s, reanalysis of old data and much new information have shifted the terms of the discussion about the relationship between Seasia and South Asia. Scholars now credit Seasians with creative appropriation of South Asian symbols and concepts for use in communicating their own messages to each other. O.W. Wolters coined the term "localization" to refer to this process.<sup>30</sup>

There is an important distinction between writing and temple-building on one hand, and government and cities on the other. Early writing and temple-building were probably the concern of only a small proportion of ancient Seasian society. Organized government and cities, on the other hand, would have



affected the vast majority of the population. If Indian influence penetrated that deeply into society, it would be a far different matter than if a few members of royalty adopted foreign customs.

As is usual in research about the past, the ideals, tastes, and aims of the upper echelons of ancient Seasian society are much more visible than those of the lower ranks. It is not easy to reconstruct the lives of the poor and illiterate, and scholars are easily seduced into focusing attention on unique works of art which were only intelligible to a small ruling clique at the expense of everyday items with which the great mass of the population was familiar. How deeply into Seasian society did imported ideas and religion penetrate? This is a difficult question, but one which we must try to answer.

There is reason to believe that in Early Classic Seasia the gap was not too wide between high and low members of society in their ability to understand and appreciate the meanings of artistic codes.<sup>31</sup> As time passed, however, Seasia's nobility and priests devised rituals and symbols which were not shared or understood by the masses. As a result, religion lost its ability to bind society together. This trend can be observed in many ancient civilizations: cultures decline and fall when the cosmology of the elite becomes highly esoteric, and the masses are deliberately excluded from understanding or participating in it, because of efforts by the religious hierarchy to curry favour by accentuating forms of knowledge meant to emphasize the dichotomy between the enlightened and those still mired in illusion. Such a strategy leads to loss of support from the masses for the worldview which underlies sociopolitical cohesion. The result is disintegration and reintegration through new cosmologies.

Scholars have been attempting to draw general conclusions about Seasia's cultural evolution for two centuries. They have experimented with several analytical terms. "Indianization" and "Sanskritization" were coined at an early stage of research to refer to the use in Seasia of art forms and intellectual concepts which appeared earlier in South Asia. These terms are not ideal because they imply cultural superiority on the part of the donor culture, and passivity on the part of the recipients. This book demonstrates that Seasians were active appropriators of those cultural elements from south Asia which they found useful as means of more efficient communication.

The appearance of early Seasian Classical civilization has yet to be explained. We cannot evaluate the significance of Indian contact without a proper understanding of the state of Seasian society in the period just before that contact took place. Unfortunately, we know little about the late prehistoric period in Seasia, especially in the equatorial and insular regions. Data which have come to light in the past few years demonstrate that sea trade was common within Seasia in the late prehistoric period, before Indian cultural elements were transferred. Seasia and India had been in contact for half a millennium before Seasians began appropriating Indian cultural symbols. Seasian society was complex before Indian traits were incorporated, and the inception of the processes of cultural transfer was due to Seasian initiative rather than external influence.

## **WORLD-SYSTEMS THEORY, GLOBALIZATION, AND INTERACTION SPHERES**

Immanuel Wallerstein's theory of a "world-system" has generated much discussion.<sup>32</sup> Many scholars have criticized the Eurocentric bias of the original model,<sup>33</sup> but agree that a focus on commerce, trade, and communication rather than politics and warfare is useful for understanding the evolution of widely

separated societies. Some have suggested that China rather than Europe should be seen as the long-term core of a world-system,<sup>34</sup> but they fail to integrate areas outside of the supposed cores into the group of independent actors, and marginalize regions such as Seasia. Their theory rests on the debatable assumption that cores will always exist which exercise hegemony over their peripheries.

The term “globalization” has been advanced as an alternative concept. No consensus on the definition of globalization has yet emerged, but one of the most promising perspectives treats globalization as a process through which different places become increasingly connected.<sup>35</sup> This is useful as a starting point, but no concrete models have yet emerged with the explanatory power of the world-system concept, flawed though that notion may be.

This book employs the term “interaction sphere” which was introduced in the 1960s to refer to a wide area of America inhabited by different cultures with local art styles, settlement patterns, modes of subsistence, etc., but sharing a special style of copper artifacts.<sup>36</sup> The distribution of Dongson drums over much of Seasia in the late Preclassic and Protoclassic periods (circa 500 BCE–600 CE) is a comparable example of an artifact type embodying a complex symbolic system which crossed cultural and linguistic as well as geographic boundaries. Ceramics and statuary have also been used as criteria for defining networks. The term “Nusantao Maritime Trading Network” has been used to refer to “a very widespread trading and communication network” which extended from the Pacific Ocean to Seasia and the Indian Ocean defined by types of pottery and stone ornaments.<sup>37</sup> The distribution of Phimai Black Ware pottery in northeast Thailand has also been compared to an interaction sphere.<sup>38</sup>

It is theoretically possible to distinguish various types of interaction spheres in overlapping areas, including economic, prestige goods, political exchange, and information flow.<sup>39</sup> The distribution patterns of mitred Visnu statues of the fifth to early seventh centuries found in southern Vietnam, peninsular Thailand, Bangka Island, and west Java<sup>40</sup> or Chinese ceramics in Seasia<sup>41</sup> are other examples of prestige goods interaction spheres.

## CULTURAL EVOLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADAPTATION

The story of Seasian cultural evolution viewed from a local perspective is one of human adaptation to a highly varied environment which fostered the formation of many groups who specialized in exploiting certain resources. Coordination and communication rather than competition were the qualities which enabled groups to survive and become relatively prosperous. There was occasional conflict, often associated with shifting cultivation, but manpower was a scarce resource in Seasia, to be carefully husbanded rather than risked on battlefields.

Two thousand years ago, Seasian societies were in the process of evolving more complex forms of organization. In other parts of the world, increasing social complexity was often correlated with increasing population density. In Seasia, population growth resulting in competition for control of vital resources such as land, labour, or food does not seem to have been an important factor in cultural evolution. Seasia’s fertile areas were not circumscribed.<sup>42</sup> It was always possible for people to escape tyranny by moving. Some other variable must therefore have been responsible. One hypothesis is that Seasian societies became more hierarchical through competition to organize impressive ceremonies.<sup>43</sup> Recent



research at late Bronze Age sites such as Ban Non Wat appears to support this hypothesis.<sup>44</sup> At the beginning of the historic period, Seasians had already begun to integrate elements from other regions (especially South Asia) into their cultures.

What force motivated Seasians to make the considerable mental effort needed to comprehend foreign media of communication and art, and to accept their absorption into pre-existing culture? The reason seems to have been connected with aspirations to social status through winning the respect of one's group. The acquisition of unfamiliar items from distant places through exploration and the formation of alliances with strangers seem to have been common strategies employed to achieve this goal. The ideologies of Hinduism and Buddhism may have seemed more logical to people in Seasia trying to make sense of their lives than beliefs in animism and ancestor worship, which focus attention on small localities. Increasing interaction with other groups and other systems may have made Seasians dissatisfied with the limited scope of their beliefs.

Seasians may also have been attracted by the advantage of a system of verbal and figural symbolic expression which facilitated communication with other groups. In the late centuries BCE, massive bronze drums made in the Dongson area of northern Vietnam were distributed over most of the region. The communication media provided by South Asia may have been more efficacious than Dongson, displacing that sphere of interaction with a new one which by 2,000 years ago encompassed the coasts of what are now India and China.

## PERIODS OF SEASIAN HISTORY, 500 BCE TO 1600 CE

This book divides the premodern history of Seasia into five periods. The first period is called the *Proto-classic*, followed by the *Classic* (subdivided into *Early*, *Middle*, and *Late* phases), and the *Postclassic*. This system is not associated with any particular region of the world; it is predicated on a sequence of artistic evolution which appears to have occurred independently in many areas. After a period during which art was characterized by fluid asymmetrical forms with individualized abstract content (the Pre-classic), there arose art marked by standardized iconography, naturalism, and symmetry (the Classic). This phase was followed by the Postclassic during which the old symbolic codes were no longer understood or meaningful, symmetry (and often skill) declined, and artistic styles became more local. This phase was transitional to the Modern era.

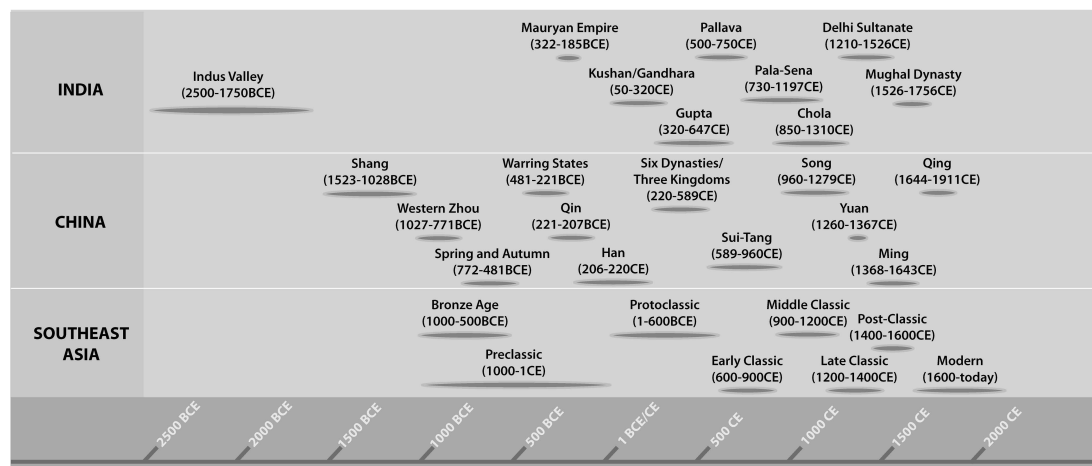
In Mesoamerica, historical archaeologists use two slightly different chronological systems. One system consists of the *Preclassic* (divided into *Early*, *Middle*, and *Late* phases), the *Classic* (divided into *Early*, *Late*, and *Terminal*), and the *Postclassic* (divided into *Early* and *Late*).<sup>45</sup> In another system, the term "Protoclassic" is applied to the period from about 300 BCE to 300 CE. During this period, regional traditions of Classic art style emerged, and the settlement pattern evolved from a single level of villages to multi-level hierarchy of sites. The Classic period is normally equated with Mayan inscriptions using the Long Count dating system, massive expansion in monumental architecture, painting, pottery, mosaics, textiles, and the elaboration of political and religious bureaucracy. The Postclassic is marked by the cessation of inscriptions using the Long Count, and the abandonment of most of the monumental ceremonial centers.<sup>46</sup>

In the Mediterranean region the period from 3000 BCE to 500 CE is conventionally termed the “Classic” era. In Seasia the Classic era covers the period from 600 to 1400 CE. There are good reasons to term the period from 1000 BCE to 1 CE in Seasia the Preclassic, since complex settlement patterns, monuments, and trade in elaborate objects embodying a sophisticated symbolic system appeared in this period. The period from 1 to 600 CE, the Protoclassic, is associated with the appearance of artistic and historical trends which led to the Classic in several parts of the region.

The “Classic period” has long been used in Indonesian artistic and cultural history. When the Indonesian Archaeological Service was created, it was organized in four divisions: Prehistory, Classic, Islamic, and Epigraphy. The Classic period in Indonesia is contemporaneous with the appropriation of artistic concepts associated with the South Asian subcontinent, which India had adapted from Hellenistic contacts mediated through its northwestern subregion, including modern Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the kingdom of Gandhara, artists who carved early statues of Buddhist deities appropriated Classic conventions found in Hellenistic art. Examples of these were readily available because of Alexander the Great’s conquest of this region, the founding of kingdoms by Greek generals there after Alexander’s death, and the dissemination of the conventions and techniques of Hellenistic sculpture and architecture (Table 1.2).

The Early Classic period (600–900 CE) is marked by the appearance of an art style used in temple architecture and iconography in many parts of the region, and by the formation (or emergence) of kingdoms which wrote inscriptions, built monuments of permanent materials, and were diplomatically recognized by China. Long-distance trade largely controlled by the Sumatran kingdom of Srivijaya expanded greatly, and systems of standardized weights, measures, and coinage appeared.

The end of the Early Classic is marked by Srivijaya’s loss of its monopoly over trade between the Indian Ocean and South China Sea, the move of the central Javanese kingdom of Mataram to the Brantas River valley, the fading into obscurity of Dvaravati and “Pyu” culture, the rise of the kingdoms of Angkor and Bagan, and the disappearance of coinage from mainland Seasia. The Middle Classic (900–1200 CE) was dominated by Angkor and Bagan on the mainland, and Malayu on Sumatra. Chinese,



**Table 1.2** Comparative chronology of art styles in India, China, and Seasia

Indian, and Arabo-Persian enclaves appeared. The Late Classic (1200–1400 CE) is correlated with the decline of Bagan and Angkor, the rise of Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Kediri, Singhasari, and Majapahit, the gradual displacement of Hinduism and esoteric Buddhism by Theravada Buddhism on the mainland and Islam on the islands, and the disappearance of Chinese and Indian enclaves.

The Postclassic began with the spread of Islam, the fall of Majapahit, the rise of Melaka, and Chinese isolationism, followed by the arrival of the Portuguese, Spanish and, at the very end of our story, the Dutch and English. There are very obvious changes in the trajectory of Seasian history. Although the changes on the mainland and the islands do not seem to be directly connected, there is a high degree of temporal simultaneity which makes it possible to apply the same periodization to both realms.

## ART, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

The study of Classic Seasia has great potential to broaden our understanding of the relationship between art, society, and technology. The assumption that technology is the determining factor in human cultural evolution is expressed by the traditional periodization of world prehistory into the Old Stone Age (Palaeolithic), Middle Stone Age (Mesolithic), New Stone Age (Neolithic), Bronze Age, and Iron Age. This system implies that technology is the independent variable, and art, culture, and religion change in response to technological innovation. The depth to which this assumption is engrained in society is exemplified by the allocation of resources among departments in universities.

Not all historians of science hold this view. A metallurgist who investigated the relationship between science, art, and history<sup>47</sup> found quite to his surprise that necessity is *not* the mother of invention. He discovered that all major advances in metallurgy, from the discovery of the first metallic alloy (bronze) to his specialty, electroplating, were all made by artists experimenting with materials. In Seasia, the earliest bronze and iron objects are beads and bracelets, not tools or weapons. Upon reflection, this makes perfect sense. People under pressure to cope with danger do not have time to experiment; they do their best to adapt existing technology to new uses.

Artists are by definition experimenters. Their discoveries are analogous to biological mutations. Most mutations are deleterious to the survival of the individual, and so are not passed on. Under certain conditions, however, mutations can be neutral or only mildly defective. When conditions change, some neutral mutations give the individuals who possess them a slight advantage over other members of the group. If these mutations can be inherited, they lead to the formation of a new species. By analogy, culture is a non-biological mutation which under certain conditions enabled humans to survive and diverge from their prehistoric forebears.<sup>48</sup> In early human evolution, art provided a reservoir of cultural “mutations” which under certain circumstances provided additional survival value, enabling groups who had invested more resources in art to survive. We know that certain animals make and use tools; technology is not a uniquely human achievement. Humans are the only species which creates art. It is this attribute which most distinguishes us from other life forms. The relationship between culture and technology, like the analogy between culture and biology, is a complex one, but cultural traits including art and religion, which only humans possess, have created a reservoir for cultural change *including technology* (considered as a dependent, not independent variable) which has enabled our species to survive.

Art is essentially a means of communication. Language also performs this function, but there are messages which are more effective when transmitted as images, buildings, textiles, pots, or music and dance than in words. Art has enabled humans to communicate more efficiently than other forms of life, and therefore to survive and evolve at a rapid rate. These observations should suffice to demonstrate that in order to understand cultural evolution in Seasia, one of the main pillars must be the study of art.

Historical narratives frequently revolve around events. Narratives in ancient history, including historical archaeology and art history, raise questions of understanding rather than judging whether certain actions or policies were “right”, “successful”, etc. In the long run, centuries rather than months or years, individuals do not count for much. Long-term histories usually focus on *structure*, meaning fundamental features such as religion and technology, rather than individual feats. There are different levels of structure: the natural environment; the economy, including long-term cycles and trends; social hierarchy; and “culture”, which includes art and religion. Ideas and works of art (including literature) endure for generations. What is important is not specific information about ideas or works of art; it is the cultural mechanism by which knowledge is preserved and transmitted from one generation to the next.

Historical structures are often contrasted with conjunctures, single unique events such as elections and battles. In ancient Seasian history we have very few records of specific events, and even if we did, they might not be very useful. Instead, scholars of the ancient past look at long-term underlying continuities such as religious beliefs, economic practices, and political institutions. The *Annales* School which developed in the 1920s in France believed that the task of the historian was to study the interrelationship of the individual and society. A record of facts alone is useless; events do not speak for themselves. The historian/archaeologist must interpret and synthesize them to find underlying structures which determine the long-term evolution of societies. As K.N. Chaudhuri wrote, “to pose a problem is the beginning and end of all history. Without problems, there is no history.”<sup>49</sup>

### The role of the artist in early Seasia

In some parts of the ancient world such as the Mediterranean or China, individual artists became famous. In Classic Seasia the names of very few artists were recorded. This implies that artists occupied quite different positions in Seasian society. It does not mean that they were not respected; the few references to them in inscriptions imply that some Javanese sculptors had high social status.

It is tempting to use Bali in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as an analogy for ancient Java, or even Seasia as a whole, since it is the only society in the region where Hinduism is still the principal religion. Analogies can be useful, but they are also deceptive unless the parameters of the analogy are clearly delineated. In Bali, it is assumed that most members of society have artistic ability. Art is not a specialized activity divorced from everyday life; in western culture, art (an abbreviation of the word “artifice”) is seen in some contexts as a vanity, a luxury, something which appeals to the non-rational portion of the brain and therefore not to be trusted. In the past 200 years, the standard role which artists play in Western society has become that of outsiders, deviants who choose to flout common mores. Some believe that artists must stand outside society and either act as critics, or as loners who avoid any form of established influence. This was not the case in earlier periods.

In Seasia modern artists also act as social critics, but the assumption common in many Seasian societies is that the artist's obligation is to engage with society, to play responsible roles rather than attack society's foundations. It is difficult to say how this vision of the artist in modern Seasia relates to the past, but it is possible to advance several hypotheses about the social position of artists during the Classic period.

Artists could have played constructive roles by producing artifacts which were useful, even necessary for survival. Statues were as important to everyday life as pots or textiles. Statues were as necessary to protect humans as clothing or shelter. Seasians in the Classic period excelled at carving stone, and probably wood (although very few examples of art in this medium survive), and in creating new architectural forms. The practice of painting on two-dimensional surfaces such as cloth probably existed, but we have no remains of it. Painting does not seem to have received much emphasis. A second hypothesis is that the media in which artists expressed themselves were not limited to representational art such as statues, paintings, or architecture. Dance and music were very important activities in Classic Seasia, to judge from inscriptions and temple reliefs.

Media which in the West are often considered minor arts had higher status in Seasia. Gold, for example, was one of the materials in which highly skilled and creative Seasian artists worked. Textile art was another medium which evolved to a high level in Seasia. Wearable textile art such as batik and ikat has become increasingly appreciated by Western collectors. It is worth noting that textile weaving has long been a medium in which women could express their artistic skill. Although we cannot prove it, it is likely that women weavers in early Seasia were esteemed for their works. Not only were their works worn but also some were hung as displays for social and religious purposes. Textiles formed currency in Seasia at various times and places.

A third hypothesis has to do with aesthetics. To return to Bali for an analogy, the quality which is used to distinguish good from poor art is termed *taksu*. This term literally means "concentration". Good art is believed to indicate that the artist was in a state of intense concentration when he or she was engaged in producing the work of art. Individuality or creativity was not major criteria used in judging aesthetic value.

A fourth hypothesis concerns the political role of art. Temples and statues were no doubt appreciated for their aesthetic and religious qualities, but they were also symbols of the patrons who commissioned them. They were at least as important as political tools as well as tokens of religious devotion. The erection of temples and dedication of statuary were important public statements. The rituals and ceremonies attendant on their construction and use were probably important means of declaring one's claim to status and of distributing largesse to one's followers. When patrons fell, the temples no longer received donations and were abandoned. The same phenomenon can be observed in modern Seasia.

### The role of the written word in early Seasia

One cannot pretend that understanding the evolution of Seasian art is sufficient to know all about Seasian history. Writing is used for different purposes than art, and preserves information with a precision found in no other medium. Seasian ancient history has benefitted from the work of a small group of

scholars. The most reliable syntheses of the history of this vast area between 1 to 1500 CE were composed by G. Coedès, D.G.E. Hall, and O.W. Wolters. These three scholars were receptive to the idea that archaeology and linguistics would expand from their modest foundations erected during the colonial period to become equal partners in the search for the factors which would account for the shape of Seasian society in the early twenty-first century.

The historical records for ancient Seasia are relatively sparse. Because of climatic conditions, warfare, and neglect, a very small proportion of old documents have survived. Most of these were written on stone or metal, are brief, and cover a limited range of subjects. It is necessary to do a considerable amount of reading between the lines to draw inferences from them about matters such as politics or economics. Another reason why historical records are rare in Seasia is that Seasian historical traditions exhibit both oral and literate features. There was no clear boundary between the two forms of preserving cultural and historical memory. Most scholars who now work on Seasian “textual” traditions emphasize the importance of interplay between orality and literacy, and emphasize the importance of the performative aspects of Seasian texts.<sup>50</sup>

Seasia began to appear in foreign sources (Chinese, South Asian, and Mediterranean) centuries before the oldest documents appear in Seasia. Until the seventh century, foreign sources are still more plentiful and more informative than local texts; local texts alone are insufficient to enable us to write a connected story about Seasia before the Classic period began. Therefore the period from 1 to 600 CE is termed the “Protoclassic”. Beginning with the Classic period in the seventh century, we can rely on local inscriptions and artifacts as our principle source of information, and write a story from a Seasian perspective.

## Archaeology in Seasia

The third line of evidence comprises artifacts used in everyday life. Historical archaeology in the sense of using artifacts to study the lives of the common people who are almost invisible in temple architecture or art history only began to make an impact in Seasia in the 1970s, but until the 1990s this field made little progress. This situation has fortunately changed significantly since then, and the pace of development in 2015 is accelerating.

This book is a historical archaeology of classical Seasia, from the beginning of the first millennium CE until the end of the sixteenth century. The Early Classic begins with the appearance of new sources of information; the Postclassic ends with the arrival of the British and Dutch. European sources became the predominant material for studying Seasia for the next several centuries.

## Ethnicity and archaeology

The term “cultures” is used in both anthropology and archaeology, but the meanings assigned to the word are not precisely the same. Anthropologists have traditionally studied groups of people in order to identify patterns of shared behavior which have been learned from elders. Culture thus has a historical dimension. Much anthropological research has been devoted to the ways in which culture is



disseminated and inherited by one generation from the previous one. Language and writing are two of the major ways in which culture is transmitted.

Archaeologists, even those who deal with people who expressed themselves in writing, are unable to use one of the principal techniques on which cultural anthropologists rely: participant observation. Much archaeological data, including inscriptions and permanent art, is biased toward the concerns of the elite, because the masses did not leave written records. The most common artifact which is capable of representing the everyday lives of the vast majority of people from the past is pottery; in Seasia the study of pottery has not yet become popular.<sup>51</sup>

Modern anthropologists often use the term “ethnic groups” rather than “cultures”. This is in part due to dissatisfaction with the assumption that cultures were clearly demarcated from one another and exhibited a high degree of internal homogeneity. It is now understood that cultures are idealized mental constructions, and that group members disagree among themselves on the criteria which distinguish members of the group from non-members. Furthermore, there are abundant examples of people who move from one group to another.

If the concept of group membership and identity is problematic when dealing with living people, the problem of identifying units of study for the past is much more difficult. Archaeologists tend to use terms derived from modern ethnic groups living in the areas where they work, such as Malays, Javanese, Mons, etc. This custom is based on assumptions of cultural and genetic continuity between premodern and modern populations which cannot be tested. Such labels are therefore avoided in this book wherever possible. This book relies on the concept of archaeological units based on artifacts rather than any inferred association with groups of people defined by other criteria such as language, which cannot be observed archaeologically.

Archaeologists sometimes use the word “cultures” to refer to groups of artifacts which are assumed to represent groups of people analogous to the cultures of today, even though we know that artifacts often are moved across linguistic and cultural boundaries. If we had an adequate quantity of archaeological data, we would probably be able to detect boundaries between cultures which would have corresponded closely with divisions based on social structure, kinship, language, and the many other criteria which people use to distinguish between their group and others. Unfortunately archaeological data are extremely scarce under the best of circumstances. This renders attempts to study the past of particular anthropological cultures extremely difficult from an epistemological perspective. One archaeologist has listed seven criteria for identifying an ethnic group: a collective name; a shared origin myth; belief in a shared history; a homeland; “group solidarity overriding class distinctions”; common belief in something sacred; and similar material culture.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, only the last item is usually available for archaeologists to study.

The ideal solution would be to create a category of analysis called the “archaeological culture”, which would not imply any necessary connection with living people. Unfortunately, archaeologists are often encouraged by public curiosity to couch their analyses in terms which enable the living to justify their image of their ancestors as superior people, or to claim rights over the interpretation of the past in terms which emphasize the contributions of the dominant group. The degree to which archaeology has been driven by colonialism, then by nationalism, has been well documented for Asia as well as the rest

of the world.<sup>53</sup> Archaeologists (like their anthropologist brethren) have debated the issue of cultures and ethnicity for decades. One of the main ethical dilemmas stems from the fact that funding for archaeological research is often predicated on the assumption that the results of the research will contribute to a nationalist agenda, creating a situation where a Faustian bargain has to be made.<sup>54</sup>

There is no question that the idea of ethnicity has existed from the beginning of history. The perception of ethnicity has probably changed over time, but we are unlikely to be able to detect this with the scholarly tools we have. Boundaries between ethnic groups in the past may have been more or less permeable than they are today. Some ethnic groups today erect more permeable barriers to entry than others.<sup>55</sup> Some ethnic groups have recently shifted from a more open to a more restrictive definition of group membership.<sup>56</sup>

It is impossible to avoid the use of contemporary ethnic labels completely in this book. However, their use will be limited as far as possible. Instead, this book will identify “archaeological cultures” with the understanding that they do not stand for any specific living group. Ethnicity in much of ancient Seasia was probably an identity which could be changed without undue difficulty. Low population density probably resulted in situations where outsiders were encouraged to join another group by adopting a few symbols such as dress, language, codes of behavior, and religious beliefs and rituals. Lack of knowledge of these codes, and birth outside the group, was rarely used to bar people from joining another group. In a very few cases, particularly that of Classic-period Angkor, one can detect something of this attitude, but even there the category of “barbarian”, that is, someone from a different cultural background who could speak Khmer language, was recognized as lending a degree of respect.

An archaeological culture should in theory be defined by artifacts from various functional categories which share some attributes besides material and technology. Archaeologists who have grappled with this problem include Dorothy Washburn, who advises us to elicit native stylistic categories; but category boundaries shift with knowledge on the part of the native.<sup>57</sup>

## **Dimensions of cultural evolution in Classic Seasia**

Questions regarding the process of cultural evolution in Seasia over the period 500 BCE to 1600 CE cover a broad spectrum of subjects. They can be summarized as follows:

### ***Urbanization***

How did cities evolve? How did they compare with premodern cities in other parts of the world? What roles did palaces, markets, temples, forts, transport routes, and workshops play in stimulating the growth of cities and shaping their formation? How was space organized within them? How densely inhabited were they? What was the range of activities conducted in and around them? What kinds of structures were built inside them?



***Maritime trade***

How did early trading systems in Seasia work? Why did people travel long distances and undergo hardships and danger to trade? How important was trade and the wealth gained from trade in determining social status? What objects were traded? How did maritime trade operate? How important were people from outside Seasia (e.g., Chinese, South Asians, Persians, Arabs) in shaping Seasian trade and society? How did trade networks operate between Seasian ports, as compared with networks involving more distant regions? Was trade the driving force which led Malayo-Polynesians to explore two of the world's oceans for the first time?

***Religion***

How did Seasians appropriate foreign religions? Which social groups were involved in this transmission? What were the processes in operation at different times and places? How did Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam become incorporated into the region's cultures?

***Technology and art***

What is the typology and chronology of Seasian pottery? Why did some areas on the Seasian mainland (e.g., Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Myanmar) begin making high-fired ceramics? How much of this technology was imported from China? How did it reach Seasia? How much of this craft was locally invented?

***Monumental construction***

What was the symbolism behind the planning and construction of Seasia's major structures, several of which have been declared World Heritage sites? How did Seasia's sparse population design and build some of the most elaborate and beautiful religious complexes in the world, such as Borobudur, Angkor, and Bagan? Can the functions of these buildings and their significance for social organization be reconstituted by examining narratives emblazoned on their walls (bas-reliefs, mural paintings)?

***Status of women***

Most scholars agree that women occupied prominent positions in Seasia compared with other parts of the world.<sup>58</sup> Inscriptions indicate that in pre-Angkorian Cambodia (during the seventh and eighth centuries), at least two queens ruled independently, and in other polities they occupied positions of great

authority. In the Angkorian period, no queens are attested, but royal genealogies indicate that claimants to the throne could appeal to descent through the female line to establish their legitimacy. Queens ruled at numerous times and places in the rest of Seasia.

In ancient Seasia, most people calculated descent through both maternal and paternal lines. Philosophical and religious systems stressed the complementarity of the two sexes rather than the dominance of one over the other. There were regional differences in this pattern. Women are less prominently mentioned in sources from Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam. One explanation for a difference in the relative position of women, which corresponds roughly to the mainland/island dichotomy, may stem from the role of women in commerce. Seasian women historically played an important part in trade, as both buyers and sellers in markets. In modern Seasia, women often control household finances. Trade and the use of money were much more significant in the island realms than on the mainland, where economies tended to minimize the role of markets in favour of administered systems of distribution. Women's greater power in the islands may have been connected with the greater importance of market exchange there.

Women in insular Seasia seem to have been more literate than their mainland counterparts. On the mainland, writing was mainly taught to boys during their formal period of residence in Buddhist monasteries, a resource which was not available to women. In Java, Sumatra, and Bali, on the other hand, women needed to be literate and numerate because of their roles in trade. Women in mainland Seasia of the higher classes may also have learned to read and write at home. Stories describe princesses who wrote romantic letters to their lovers, so this ability was plausible for Classic Seasians.

Another important role which women played was that of diplomat. Women were seen in premodern Seasia as better negotiators, and therefore led diplomatic missions between Seasian countries. Famous female figures whom we shall meet in this book include Camadevivangsa, Gayatri, Nyai Ageng Pinatih, Suhita, Tribhuvanatungadevi, and the Trung sisters.

## Historiography of Seasia

As a result of many factors, including climate and fundamental institutional and religious changes, few manuscripts from the Classic period exist. Older texts copied in later centuries usually were revised to fit the audience and the political conditions of the era in which they were copied. The first generations of western historians, such as J.D. Legge, who dealt with Seasian texts asserted that "there was no genuinely historical tradition in Southeast Asia" because indigenous genres such as *babad*, *hikayat*, *tamnan*, and *yazawin* were compiled to legitimize political rule.<sup>59</sup> Some were contradicted by inscriptions. Scholars trying to write political history in Seasia expressed frustration at the lack of factual reliability in chronicles. Current historians generally agree that although chronicles cannot be taken as objective records of facts, they do contain usable information about the periods when they were written. The application of structural analysis as opposed to narrative reconstructions, sometimes stigmatized as "king and battle" history, has emerged as an alternative approach to the reconstruction of ancient Seasian society using local sources. Chronicles can yield cultural "statements" like those which analysis

of contemporary source material might provide.<sup>60</sup> One can hope to extract such elements of intellectual history as attitudes toward change and concepts of ethnicity and other forms of identity. Florida, for instance, recognized the potential of texts to challenge the centralizing tendency of the Javanese court. Writing was powerful and political, and thus has to be contextualized. *Babad Jaka Tingkir*, an example of a subversive text, challenged conventional *babad* form by ignoring narrative progression built on the genealogy of the Javanese kingdom of Mataram, and emphasized interruptions centering on marginalized persons.

The study of Seasian history and historiography was also influenced by the works of Albert B. Lord, Milman Parry, and Walter Ong, who examined the relationship between orality and literacy.<sup>61</sup> Scholars who began to examine oral and written Seasian textual traditions and their relationship to academic studies can be divided between those who saw the two media as separate and those who advocated dynamic interplay between the two modes of transmission. Veidlinger showed how oral transmission of Buddhist texts was prevalent in northern Thailand until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Orality continues to be an important component in the transmission of Buddhist texts in northern Thailand and Myanmar where religious commentaries and texts are recited and copied by monks in more traditional monasteries.

In Myanmar, in addition to a few thousand stone inscriptions, there are also inscribed copper, gold, and silver plates, and even stone urns and pottery. In Myanmar, these are inscribed in different languages: Pyu, Sanskrit, Pali, Old Mon, Old Burmese, and Shan. Of particular note are multi-lingual inscriptions such as the Myazedi inscription and the Sawlumin inscription from Myittha, near Mandalay, discovered in 2013. The oldest surviving manuscript in Myanmar dates from the fifteenth century: a sophisticated poem entitled *Rakhaing Minthami Egyin* (*Ballad of the Rakhine [Arakan] Princess*). Myanmarese recognize nine main genres which contain historical information, including records of the founding of Buddhist sanctuaries; legal records; royal chronicles resembling Indian models or *yaza-win* (*rajavamsa*); and legends. Another literary form is called *ayedawpon*, “memoires” or “historical accounts”; these are prose works usually dedicated to heroic kings and their exploits, particularly in the military sense. Burmese chroniclers of the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries were expected to portray archetypes whom people should imitate if virtuous, or avoid imitating if evil. The golden age of the *egyin* (ballad) coincided with the first Taungngu period (1539–1599), during which many significant celebrated verses were produced. The Restored Taungngu at Ava (1597–1752) marked the florescence of prose, especially the production of chronicles focusing on kings and polities.

In Indonesia, approximately 3,000 inscriptions from the Classic period have been found, mostly on the island of Java. They are written in Sanskrit, Old Malay, Old Javanese, Old Balinese, Arabic, and Tamil. Many are badly worn, but uncertainties in deciphering Sanskrit inscriptions can sometimes be overcome because they were written according to specific rules. Indonesian authors had a choice of several genres, including chronicles and historical romances such as *kidung* and *babad*. The *kakawin* literary genre was adapted from the Indian *kavya* form. Javanese authors working in this genre often emphasized the religious, meditative function of the acts of writing and of reading, either aloud or silently. Both were believed to be steps toward attaining unity with the divine essence which was thought to permeate the universe.

Primary Thai language sources begin in the thirteenth century. Charnvit Kasetsiri analyzed three genres.<sup>62</sup> *Tamnan* (“story, legend, myth”), often written in Pali, focus on the spread of Buddhism and the accomplishments of kings and other important people such as *risi*, or mystically inclined ascetics, and religious teachers, who contributed to Buddhism’s development. The *tamnan* genre came into existence before the fifteenth century, and was popular until the eighteenth century, when it was gradually overshadowed by the *phongsawadan*. The language of this form was Thai, and the center of attention shifted from religion to the courts. Authors who wrote in this form were courtiers rather than monks. The *phongsawadan* discussed the foundation of Thai kingdoms in ancient times. A third genre, *prawatsat*, which came into existence in the nineteenth century, marked the appearance of goals and methods similar to those of modern academic historians. Each of these genres can be used by modern historians, but they must be clearly distinguished and analyzed in terms of the objectives of their authors and the paradigms established by their genres, rather than by some absolute standard such as a European definition of “history”.

The advent of print affected Seasian manuscript culture by desacralizing Buddhist manuscripts and “popularizing” history, which was an elite enterprise until the mass production of texts began. In Myanmar, for instance, manuscripts were so costly that a complete set of the *Tipitaka* cost approximately 3,000 *kyat* of silver, which was enough to buy 5,250 acres of rice fields. The introduction of print culture altered the production and consumption of Burmese *yazawin*, but this did not take effect until the nineteenth century. When it did, it promoted a history shared by people who could read and write a vernacular language.

### **A framework for analysis of Classic Seasia: Political, artistic, and economic variables**

Scholars disagree about the best paradigm (a theory of the most important variables to study, how they are linked, and acceptable standards of proof) for studying Classic Seasia. An example of an early paradigm in historical archaeology was created by V. Gordon Childe, who listed 10 variables diagnostic of the Urban Revolution in Mesopotamia: large population and large settlements (cities); occupational specialization and sophisticated division of labour; production of enough agricultural surplus to support bureaucracy and hierarchically organized society; monumental public architecture; a ruling class; writing; exact and predictive sciences; sophisticated art; long-distance trade; and the state (equated with a professional army).<sup>63</sup>

Subsequent research has demonstrated that these 10 variables are not always associated with one another, and that they appear in different sequences in different parts of the world. Most archaeologists and historians now reject unilinear and monothetic theories such as the Urban Revolution in favour of multilinear sequences and polythetic concepts. The work of theory building still has far to go before a consensus can be reached on the relative importance of these variables as well as others which have since been identified.

The paradigm used in this book differs from that used by other scholars who have written on historical archaeology in Seasia. The terms “states” and “state formation” will *not* be used. They imply that

political systems can be divided into four stages: the band, tribe, chiefdom, and state; these four stages are divided by sharp thresholds, and evolution from one to the next must follow the same sequence. The term “state formation” often appears in literature on Classic Seasia, but rarely do writers define what they mean by it.<sup>64</sup> Sometimes it is equated with the formation of cities, sometimes with the institution of kingship,<sup>65</sup> but “kingship” is not defined. This is extremely problematic; it assumes that words such as *raja* or *dhatu* in Seasia can be translated as “king” without noting the significant differences between the social networks and hierarchies which existed (and still exist) in Europe and Seasia. European historians have noted that in European history “The obvious temptation to assume that the title ‘monarchy’ implied the emergence of some embryonic state should be resisted.”<sup>66</sup>

State formation is often considered synonymous with the evolution of specialized economic institutions (markets, long-distance trade, and money), complicated settlement patterns (cities), monumental architecture, and the idea that force can only be employed by designated agents of the central government, usually a professional army. Archaeological and historical evidence for the latter variable in particular is difficult to find, probably because in most societies it did not exist until quite recently (and in many societies it still exists only in theory).

These four spheres of activity (economics, politics, warfare, and monument building) must be viewed as separate variables or subsystems. They are not inevitably linked as dependent variables, and the concept of legitimate force, the main unique feature of the state formation paradigm, certainly cannot be demonstrated to be an independent and universal variable. As one archaeologist has observed, “Our research will be more operational if we specify those measurable attributes of what we call a ‘Chiefdom’ or ‘State’, and then proceed to explain changes in each of these attributes separately. . . . The entities and processes involved in these things are certainly in many cases independent of one another, and can be accounted for separately.”<sup>67</sup> Another scholar who concluded that the use of the state formation paradigm was unwarranted noted that “political scientists themselves now tend to avoid the word [state] because of its ambiguities and prefer to deal with more specific institutions and political/administrative functions.”<sup>68</sup>

One of the few scholars of Seasia who has tried to provide “an overview of . . . the rise of the South East Asian state”, Bennet Bronson,<sup>69</sup> followed the lead of scholars working in other parts of the world by emphasizing the importance of trade in state formation (though he did not stipulate whether long-distance trade is a cause or effect of state formation). Bronson asserted that Dvaravati was the first state in central Thailand, and that it could be identified by archaeological means. He thought that “regional state-like polities” (undefined) went through a “crucial period” between the tenth century BCE and the sixth century CE (a very long period; what the crucial aspects of the period were are not disclosed). Bronson declared that Angkor in the eleventh century represented “the fully-developed pattern of the autocratic, highly centralized, religiously-buttressed South East Asian state”. He asserted *a priori* that the appearance of a state is correlated with changes in modes of exchange and production; since he finds evidence of “regional-level” economic production, he concludes that this is sufficient to conclude that state formation had taken place.

He admitted that he did not discuss “several critically important aspects of what goes into ordinary definitions of the state”, including government and bureaucracy. He also admitted that many other

examples of what he considered state formation in early Seasia do not even fulfill the criterion of an integrated regional economy. He rejected the possibility that warfare and the formation of a standing army connected with the monopoly of legitimate use of force by the government occurred during the state formation process in Thailand.

In this book, the term *mandala* is employed where others might use the word “state” to refer to Classic Seasian polities. The word has the merit of having been used by Seasians in their inscriptions. The broad distribution of the mandala idea of government supports the idea that Seasia is more than an arbitrary geographical unit. Polities all over Seasia shared concepts about the nature of political power which probably represent continuity with prehistoric times. One can detect differences in the evolution of Classic mandalas. Cambodia and Vietnam display special features. By the late ninth century Cambodians had developed the idea of a polity defined by territorial boundaries. Another special feature of the Angkorian polity is its stability for almost half a millennium. By the late eleventh century, Hanoi became a permanent center of a kingdom divided into provinces and prefectures, and regular patrilineal succession was followed. By the fourteenth century, the Vietnamese formed a nationalistic attitude toward Seasian mandalas which to them seemed disorganized. Vietnam’s experience as a Chinese colony, and later as a constantly threatened kingdom, affected the evolution of their polity in a special way.

Wolters suggested that Seasian history may be only a collection of local histories. Have Malays, Javanese, Thai, or Filipinos ever thought of themselves as Seasians? To put this question into perspective, compare Seasia with Europe as a historical unit. The geographical boundaries of what is considered Europe have changed from time to time, but the idea of a supranational entity with a common historical identity north of the Mediterranean Sea has existed for centuries. The most common way of deciding what is Europe is by determining which countries and people were directly affected by the same historical and cultural processes such as Christianization, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment. Not all areas of Europe were equally affected by these processes; regional variations created local histories.

Are there themes like these which give equal unity to Seasian history? Possible themes include the sea as a uniting factor; exposure to Indian philosophy and religion; and Chinese investiture and settlement.<sup>70</sup> Was there a Seasian Mediterranean? At the dawn of history, ships crossed the South China Sea from the Philippines or Borneo to Funan with iron ore. Historical sources rarely mention such traffic; they are mainly concerned with ritual exchanges of rare, precious objects between elites. Food and clothing were certainly important, especially in regional trade, but the authors of the inscriptions had other concerns which excluded these mundane topics. Anthony Reid differed from Wolters’ opinion on the role of the sea as a theme in Seasian history; he argued that the South China Sea was even more powerful as a force for regional integration than the Mediterranean.<sup>71</sup>

Exposure to Indian philosophy and religion played a similar role to Latin in Europe: it brought a common language (Sanskrit) and a set of symbols useful in fostering communication within Seasia. Chinese settlement, began later, in the twelfth or thirteenth century, but long before then, starting in the second century CE, Seasian polities were accustomed to sending embassies to China to pay homage and seek confirmation of their status. Differences certainly exist between the uses of history in contemporary Seasia and Europe. Some European historians emphasize revolutionary disruptions within the past.



This could be related to a desire to dispense with the legacy of recent bitter conflicts and to accentuate the possibility of harmony and cooperation.

### Cities and settlement patterns

Another word which was popular in the nineteenth century but gradually disappeared from academic discourse is *civilization*. The word was abandoned partly because it was often used in the negative sense of “uncivilized” to describe non-Western societies or behavioral codes. In its positive sense, it originated from the Latin word *civis*, meaning behavior associated with urban life. It referred to both a general phenomenon, and to specific instances of that phenomenon. It is now acknowledged that all human beings are civilized, in the sense that they understand and use symbolic codes to exchange information. These codes can be language or nonverbal communication, including art. In this book, the general term “civilization” is used to refer to the universal ability of all people to communicate symbolically. “A civilization” refers to a group of archaeological sites with a common code of communication, including art style. Seasia was home to a number of classic civilizations. Their boundaries were not fixed, and they easily exchanged information and artistic ideas with one another. They were thus open systems, not closed ones.

An important variable in the discussion of Classic Seasia is the settlement pattern. The archaeologist Robert Wenke suggested that societies with high population densities could exchange information more efficiently than sparsely populated ones, especially in the era before electronic means of communication became available.<sup>72</sup> Settlement patterns thus should be correlated with efficiency of information transfer. It is difficult to detect information transfer through historical sources, because writing is only one of the many ways in which information is transmitted. It is also difficult to detect information transfer in art history, because it is often impossible to be sure whether a type of art object was made in one place and moved elsewhere, or whether the same type of art object was made in different places. Settlement patterns form a useful proxy for information transfer, but settlement density is not the only variable which influences efficiency of communication; transportation is another, and in Seasia the efficiency of water transport had an undoubted effect on communication. Nonetheless, settlement pattern studies are an important source of data for understanding cultural evolution.

Unfortunately, little research has been devoted to settlement patterns in Seasia. As is seen in the following chapters, the texts which survive from the Classic period mainly deal with political and religious topics, not with settlements. Archaeologists who deal with the Classic period have largely focused on religious sites. This deficiency is critical when we try to talk about urbanization and cities. The definition of “city” in Seasia is beset by the same problem as the definition of the “state”: a lack of precision and clarity.

Archaeologists have discovered that if the sizes of settlements in a particular region are graphed, they do not form a linear distribution; they usually form clusters. It is often possible to detect a settlement hierarchy, defined by the number of clusters or tiers in the region. In the simplest pattern, all settlements are of approximately the same size. In the next stage of settlement pattern development,



there are two tiers (larger and smaller settlements). These could be thought of as towns and villages in English-language categories. A three-tier system could be thought of as having villages, towns, and cities. Some archaeologists have sought to equate the three-tier system with the state, for example, Hinh,<sup>73</sup> who proposed that such a settlement pattern had appeared in Vietnam around 500 BCE, the beginning of the Dongson era, and that therefore a state system had emerged there.

The most comprehensive archaeological project focused on the study of settlement patterns was carried out in northeast Thailand (see “Moats, ramparts, mounds, and settlement patterns of mainland Seasia”, Chapter 3).<sup>74</sup> The archaeologists who conducted this research suggested that a two-tier hierarchy which emerged there was evidence of state formation. Charantiyakarn suggested that the two-tier system there was indicative of the chiefdom level of political evolution.<sup>75</sup> Higham and Kijngam agree that the late prehistoric society in northeast Thailand (the middle Chi valley) was organized on the chiefdom level, and that the state appeared there circa 700–1000 CE.<sup>76</sup>

The most comprehensive study of early Seasian cities is that of Paul Wheatley.<sup>77</sup> In a synthesis of the history and archaeology of settlement patterns in China, he limited his definition of the city to such generalizations as “a set of integrated institutions”, a “principle of regional integration”, and “a generator of effective space”.<sup>78</sup> Rather than studying the city as a type of archaeological site, he focused on the development of urbanism, identified as “a generalized level of sociocultural integration” manifested in concrete form as buildings, but also in institutions, patterns of land use, division of labour, “a way of life”, and interdependence characterized by expansion of “a sphere of compliance and control”.<sup>79</sup> The city is “a focus of innovation”. He implies that urbanism is definable as a mode of economic exchange, which he was convinced originated from collections of offerings by temples (“ceremonial centres” in his phrase).

Wheatley’s approach is problematic in several other respects, including his distinction between “primary” and “secondary” regions of urban generation. Wheatley cited Bronislaw Malinowski’s statement that “origins do not differ fundamentally whether they occur by invention or by diffusion”, but in another work he clearly stipulates that the process of change in “primary” areas is different from that in “secondary” areas. Wheatley concluded that all Seasian urbanization was the result of external influence: Chinese in Vietnam, Indian everywhere else.<sup>80</sup>

The effects of communication between Seasia and other regions are discussed in every part of this book. The assumption employed is in harmony with that expressed by Malinowski: that human contact between groups goes on all the time, and that people are always appropriating exogenous elements they find attractive. The idea of “diffusion”, however, can be traced back to an early way of thinking about communication between cultures on higher and lower stages of development, in which less advanced people imitate more advanced cultures. Completely unconsidered was how such a complex cultural attribute as the city could be diffused by mere exposure to a city and transplanted to another region. Wheatley’s assumptions and approach cannot be used as a guide to the process of Seasian urbanization. A new paradigm has to be sought.

One way to talk about settlement types in Seasia is to define settlement hierarchies: one-tier, two-tier, three-tier, or even more complicated systems. Such a procedure is very useful for conducting comparative studies of different regions and periods. Unfortunately we cannot do this yet, since archaeologists

have not collected this kind of data. Even if they had, would we be justified in defining these settlement types using the English concepts of hamlet, village, town, city, megalopolis, conurbation, etc.? There are obvious philosophical objections which stand in the way of such a simplistic procedure. It is, however, possible to try to reconstruct the Classic period Seasian view of types of settlements.

### Seasian concepts of settlement types

In ancient India, towns were differentiated according to functions; a ruler's capital was *pattana durga*, a merchant town or market was *nigama*.<sup>81</sup> The word *nagara* in Sanskrit has two meanings. It can refer to a temple with a ground plan which has square ends (as distinguished from those which are octagonal, *dravida*, or apsidal, *vesara*). The other meaning is that of a royal capital. This term, sometimes spelled *nagari*, implies the presence of a palace, a *pura* or *puri*. Both come from the Vedic word *pur*, meaning "rampart" or "fort". Later they both meant "citadel" in India.<sup>82</sup> Stutterheim thought that *pura* in fourteenth-century Java meant the walled palace complex alone, whereas *puri* referred to the inner palace where the ruler lived, also called *dalam* in Javanese. The fourteenth-century Javanese poem *Desavarnana* uses both *pura* and *puri* interchangeably, though *pura* is more common. In Balinese, *pura* implies a walled temple compound, whereas *puri* is a royal compound.

Seasian historical sources do not provide descriptions of settlements, large or small, so that we do not know how big they were, and archaeological research capable of doing this has not been carried out. Classic Seasian languages had no word for "city". Complex settlement patterns did exist, but Seasians employed different factors in classifying settlements. The word *nagara* is defined in most Sanskrit-English dictionaries as "town". In Seasia, the word evolved many local variants. In Khmer it was pronounced as *angkor*; in late twelfth-century Cambodia the term meant the royal palace complex containing the apartments for the king and his court, the Bayon and Baphuon temples, the Phimeanakas tower, and other structures in the walled compound which today is called Angkor Thom ("the big *nagara*"). In Thai the word is pronounced *nakhon* and means "town". Epigraphers suggest that "town" is an appropriate translation in Indonesia.<sup>83</sup> One believed that *nagara* in fourteenth-century Java meant the walled palace complex and its immediate surroundings as in Cambodia.<sup>84</sup> In Java in the early Islamic period, *negara* was used to refer to the royal residence, surrounded by lands called *negara agung*; areas farther from the center of power were the *manca negara*.

Most definitions of cities assume that residents of a city do not produce their own food, and that land in the city is used for other purposes than agriculture. A fourteenth-century Javanese court text suggests that this was a criterion for defining a *nagara*: "What is called the *nagara*? All where one can go out (of his compound) without passing through paddy fields."<sup>85</sup> In Indonesia, especially in the *Desavarnana*, a fourteenth-century poem about the capital of Majapahit, *nagara* referred to compounds of the ruler or other nobles, usually walled, and others where relatives and high officials lived. People who lived in the *nagara* of Majapahit included artisans, possibly wage-earners independent of patrons, thus forming a kind of floating population. *Nagara* is contrasted with *desa* or *pradesa*, meaning a non-urban district, and with *thani*, peasants' cultivated land or rural settlement.

In West Sumatra, *negeri* or *nagari* has long been used to refer to a territory which extended from the settled area “to the watersheds on the mountains, to the mouths of the valleys”. *Nagari* thus include jungle and agricultural land, fishponds, cock-fighting places. In West Sumatran custom, any settlement of a type called *koto*, “fortified place”, with a mosque and a council house within its walls qualified to be called a *nagari*.<sup>86</sup> In the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, a chronicle from Aceh, Sumatra, *negeri* “denotes a fairly large community, centered usually on a river estuary, an entrepot for foreign merchants, with some political influence over the surrounding territory”.<sup>87</sup> In seventeenth-century Makassar, Sulawesi, the word *negori* meant the foreign merchant quarter.<sup>88</sup>

Basic questions which cannot yet be answered are whether the royal palaces of Classic Seasia were walled, whether a large number of people lived in them, and how many kinds of economic, religious, and administrative activities were conducted inside their walls. An important related question is whether the palaces were surrounded by many other dwellings and other spaces such as workshops and markets where people who were not food producers lived and worked. Even their basic layouts are not yet precisely known.

Few Classic-period palaces in Seasia have been studied. The probable palace complex in Angkor in the Middle Classic occupies only one corner of the walled area, which may have constituted the royal enclosure; the rest of the area has yet to be examined in detail, though recent Lidar surveys and one long-term mapping exercise have begun to change this situation (see “Angkor Thom”, Chapter 6). A large portion of a probable Middle Classic palace complex has been excavated in Bagan, Myanmar; analysis of this site is in progress. In East Java the probable site of a fourteenth-century palace complex has been located; it seems to have lain in one corner of a huge urban complex covering 100 square kilometers (see “Archaeology of Majapahit”, Chapter 7).

Chinese sources provide some historical information on this subject. However, it is important to remember that Chinese sometimes used their vocabulary to refer to situations which were not identical to those in China, so it is impossible to be absolutely sure that we can translate these Chinese sources literally. One author, Tung Dien, around 640 CE, wrote that at Heling, west Java, “the ruler’s residence is in a compound surrounded by a wall of wooden stakes”. The *Xin Tang Shu*, probably based on the period around 666 CE, says that a chief of Kampe, east Sumatra, lived inside a stockade.<sup>89</sup> Other Chinese sources from the Classic period seem to describe royal compounds with walls but do not describe their surroundings. One Middle Classic source says that the people lived scattered outside the place where the ruler of a Sumatran kingdom lived,<sup>90</sup> suggesting that there was no urban concentration of people or activities around the palace complex.

The shift in meaning of the words *pura/puri* in India from “citadel” to “settlement” also occurred in Malay. The word *kota* originally meant stockade, but in modern Indonesian is used to translate English “city”. In Java on the other hand the word *kuwu* in the fourteenth century meant “manor” in the sense of a walled section of the capital city under the control of a nobleman. In Sumatra the word became *kubu* and was applied to forts. In Malaysia, the English word “city” is translated with the word *bandar*, Persian for trading port.

Thus, foreign and local words were employed in various parts of Seasia to denote different types of settlements defined on the basis of social as well as physical criteria. The presence of a royal palace did

not necessarily imply the presence of a densely populated area nearby. Royal power, defensive works, a community of foreign traders, a concentration of local artisans, and religious or ceremonial centres were all independent variables, which could combine in different ways and appear in different sequences. It is therefore impossible to speak simply in terms of “cities” and “urbanization” when dealing with Classic Seasia. We must be specific in describing what is found at each site.

Another way of studying early Seasian settlement patterns is to investigate two contrasting types of upper-level settlements in multi-tier societies: the orthogenetic and heterogenetic. Orthogenetic cities are similar to the kind of early urban centres conceived by Wheatley: they usually have large monuments but little evidence of dense populations or a wide range of economic activity. These sites seem to have been ceremonial and administrative centres. The economies of such societies seem to have been administered by the central governments. Money did not exist in them. The elite controlled production and distribution of basic commodities. Possession of luxury items which functioned as status symbols seems to have been limited to a small group of people. Social mobility in these societies was also rare; status was ascribed at birth. The economic basis of these societies was usually agriculture. These centres are normally found in arable territories.

In heterogenetic cities, status was usually achieved through individual efforts. Trade and industry were often concentrated in the same location. Money was used to facilitate distribution. Investment in temples was limited. Sites of this type of city tend to be located at junctions of trade routes.<sup>91</sup> The development of both types of city is one topic in historical archaeology to which Seasian data can make a significant contribution. (For further discussion, see “Settlement patterns: Dendritic and central place”, Chapter 4).

## CONCLUSION

The study of Seasian historical archaeology is still in its early stage. We have identified major questions which can be posed, and the types of data which need to be collected to answer them. Collection and analysis of much new material is in progress as these words are being written. Many new and exciting discoveries are yet to appear, both in the field and in the laboratory.

The goal of this book is not to provide final answers to these questions, but to collate the available information, and to assist the reader to understand the subjects on which future historical archaeologists are likely to focus their efforts.

## NOTES

- 1 Wang 2005: x–xi.
- 2 [www.tradineconomicscom/india/gdp](http://www.tradineconomicscom/india/gdp).
- 3 McEvedy and Jones 1978: 190–203.
- 4 Curran and Derman 2012: 188.
- 5 An average density of 135.6 people per square kilometer; “Gross domestic product, current prices”. International Monetary Fund. Retrieved October 2012.

- 6 Gross domestic product, current prices. International Monetary Fund. Retrieved October 2012.
- 7 [www.tradineconomics.com/india/gdp](http://www.tradineconomics.com/india/gdp).
- 8 Miksic 1999.
- 9 Reid 1992: 462.
- 10 Reid 1993: 72.
- 11 Kratoska et al. 2005: 2.
- 12 Wolters 1982, 1999.
- 13 Wolters 1999: 91.
- 14 Wolters 1999: Postscript II; White 1995.
- 15 Wolters cited Richard O'Connor (1995) as the reason for changing his mind on this point. In fact, O'Connor argued that one agro-cultural complex replaced another rather than that whole populations were displaced (R. O'Connor 1995: 970).
- 16 *Education about Asia* 3/2, 1998: 16.
- 17 Sanders and Price 1968: 189–193.
- 18 Headland (ed) 1992.
- 19 Miksic 1985; Roo de la Faille 1929; Wolters 1967.
- 20 McVey 2005: 313, 317.
- 21 Deetz 1977:5.
- 22 Orser 1996: 27.
- 23 Idem.
- 24 Orser 2004: 7–14.
- 25 Schuyler 1977.
- 26 Lane 2007.
- 27 Glover 2006: 18.
- 28 Nelson 2005: 45.
- 29 Miksic 1991.
- 30 Wolters 1982: 52–55.
- 31 See Reid 1988: 202 on the lack of distinction between popular and court culture in early Seasia.
- 32 Wallerstein 1974–1989.
- 33 For example, Frank and Gills (eds) 1993.
- 34 Frank 1998.
- 35 For example, Jennings 2011.
- 36 Caldwell 1964.
- 37 Solheim 1975: 158; 2000: 274.
- 38 McNeil and Welch 1991.
- 39 Eyre 2011.
- 40 Dalsheimer and Manguin 1998.
- 41 Miksic and Goh [2016].
- 42 Carneiro 1988.
- 43 Geertz 1980.
- 44 Higham and Kijngam 2011.
- 45 Henderson 1997: xvii.
- 46 Sanders and Price 1968: 29–31.
- 47 Cyril Stanley Smith 1981.
- 48 It is important to note that cultures are *not* analogous to species, since they can exchange traits, whereas biological species cannot interbreed and have fertile offspring.
- 49 Chaudhury 1990:5.
- 50 Flueckiger and Sears 1991; Proudfoot 2002; Cummings 2003; Sweeney 1987; Veidlinger 2006; Goh 2015.

- 51 For a summary of the study of Seasian ceramics, see the essays in Miksic (ed) 2003 and 2009.
- 52 Lamberg-Karlovsky 1997: 37.
- 53 Chakrabarti 1997; Glover 2006; Jones 1997.
- 54 Kohl and Fawcett 1995: 7.
- 55 The classic studies of highly permeable boundaries have been conducted in Myanmar; Leach 1954, Friedman 1998.
- 56 For example, Milner 1982, 2003; Andaya 2008, in the case of Malay identity.
- 57 Hodder 1986; Whallon and Brown 1982 on archaeological classification.
- 58 The most complete discussion of the subject is found in Barbara Andaya 2006, who focused on the changes in women's roles and status which occurred with the beginning of the modern period. See also Jacobsen 2008 for a study of women's status in Classic-period Cambodia. See also Reid 1988: 5, 162 ff.
- 59 Legge 1992, 2.
- 60 For example, Aung-Thwin 1982, Wyatt 1976, Wyatt 2000, Florida 1995, Ricklefs 1998.
- 61 Lord 1960; Parry 1971; Ong 1988.
- 62 Kasetsiri 1979.
- 63 Childe 1950/1974.
- 64 For an elaborate attempt to define the early state in Seasia, see Zakharov 2007.
- 65 For example, Wheatley 1983: 294.
- 66 Fox 1971: 28.
- 67 Hill 1977: 101.
- 68 Riggs 1976.
- 69 Bronson 1979.
- 70 Anthony Reid created a different list: the finger knife (for harvesting rice); cock fighting; the game of takraw; the prominence of women in ritual, marketing, agriculture, and the calculation of kinship; and the importance of debt in determining social obligations; Reid 1988: 5. Most of these would not seem to be prominent in defining Seasia as a region in 2015, but a case can be made for considering them to have been relevant in the past.
- 71 Reid 1988: XIV.
- 72 Wenke 1981: 115.
- 73 Hinh 1984.
- 74 Kijngam et al. 1980; Higham and Kijngam 1984.
- 75 Chantantiyakarn 1984.
- 76 Higham and Kijngam 1984b.
- 77 Wheatley 1983.
- 78 Wheatley 1971: 6, 72, 388.
- 79 Wheatley 1983: 20.
- 80 B. Malinowski 1944 *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago; Wheatley 1979: 300 note 4; Wheatley 1983: 263, 421 note 11.
- 81 Ghosh 1973: 46, 48.
- 82 Ghosh 1973: 45.
- 83 Christie 1992; Vogel 1925; Pigeaud III: 121.
- 84 Stutterheim 1948: 1.
- 85 Pigeaud 1962: III, 21.
- 86 Westenenk 1915: 91–92, 126, 129.
- 87 Hill 1960: 173 note 2.
- 88 Sutherland 1986: 41.
- 89 Wolters 1967: 215–216; 1970: 44.
- 90 Groeneveldt 1960: 63.
- 91 Miksic 2000.

## 2

# ENVIRONMENTS, LANGUAGES, CULTURES, AND PEOPLE

### GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

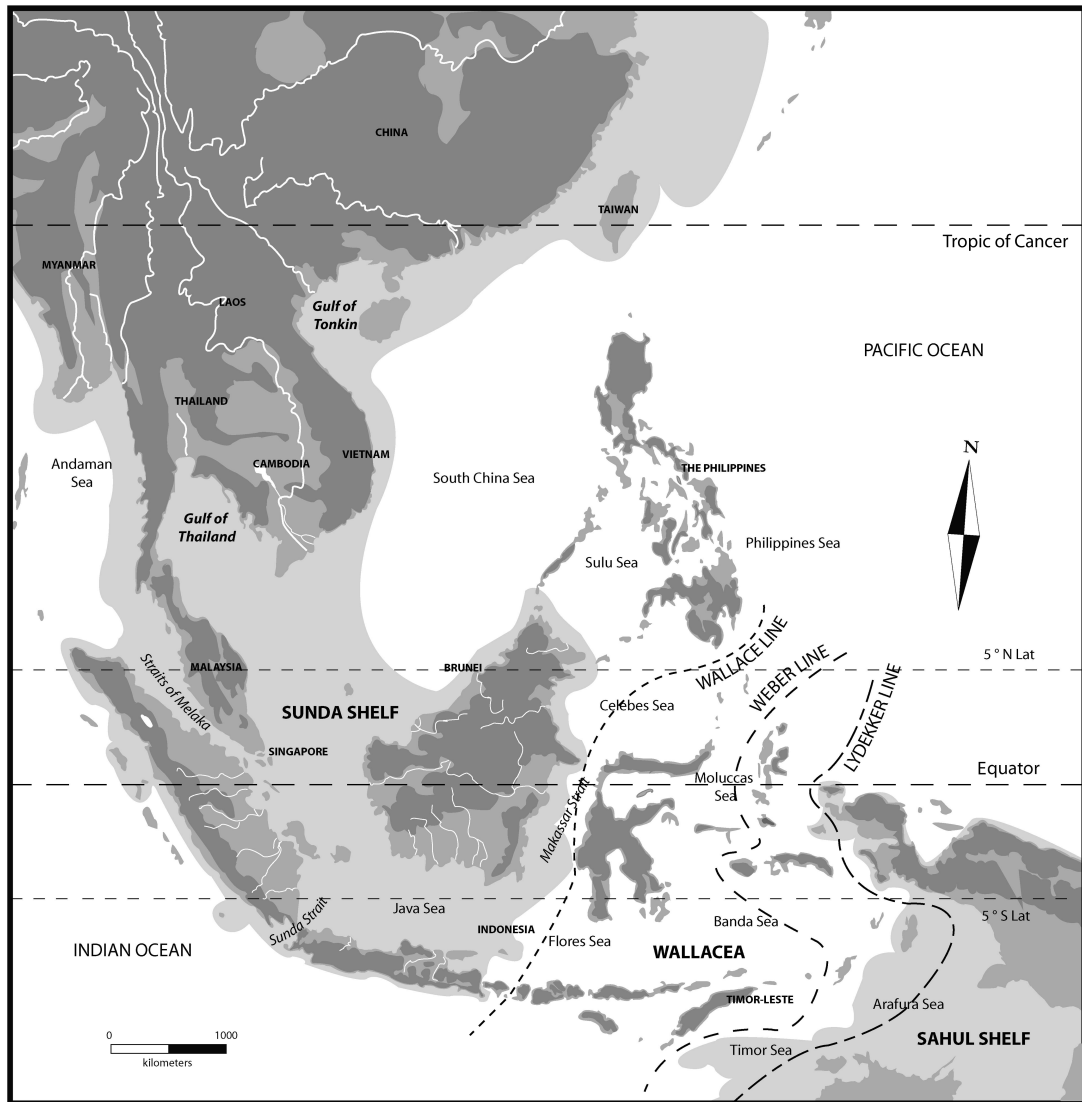
The “tropics” are defined by the limits of the sun’s vertical rays: the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, 23.43732° north and south latitudes. The area between these two latitudes is normally hot and wet. Beyond this general similarity, however, lie infinite variations in climate, soil, and topography, which have powerful effects on living beings in their struggle to survive.

The Seasian tropics can be divided into a grid consisting of nine parts (Figure 2.1). Three climatic zones lie parallel to the equator: the northern tropics, the equatorial zone, and the southern tropics. The tropics experience significant dry seasons. In the Köppen system the differentiating feature is at least one month with less than 6 centimeters of rain. The boundary between the northern tropics and the ever-wet equatorial zone begins at approximately 5° north latitude at the north tip of Sumatra, the border between peninsular Malaysia and south Thailand, and north of Mindanao in the Philippines. The southern boundary of the equatorial zone runs from Central Java Province east across the middle of the Java Sea. The equatorial belt is thus approximately 1,100 kilometers wide.

The three climatic zones are divided into three east-west areas. On the west is Sunda (consisting of mainland Seasia and western insular Seasia), which forms the southeastern edge of Asia’s continental shelf. Sahul on the east lies on the Australian continental shelf. Wallacea in the middle is separate from both continents. Sunda is divided from Wallacea by Wallace’s Line, named after Alfred Russel Wallace, the nineteenth-century naturalist and contemporary of Charles Darwin. He discovered that Asian flora and fauna extended as far east as a line running between Luzon and Palawan in the Philippines, then between Borneo and Sulawesi, and between Bali and Lombok.

Max Carl Wilhelm Weber realized that Asian and Australian fauna are both found in a zone east of Wallace’s line, so he drew another line between Papua New Guinea and Halmahera, stretching south between eastern Maluku and Australia, which corresponds to the eastern extremity of this transitional





**Figure 2.1** Seasian topography

zone, east of which no more Asian mammals are found. Weber coined the terms “Sunda” and “Sahul”. Within these nine zones (the tropics and the equatorial climatic zone, and Sunda, Sahul, and Wallacea), are many subregions.

The tropics have been less affected by climatic fluctuations such as Ice Ages than temperate zones. Human beings have formed part of the biota of Seasia for 1.6 million years, long enough for them to have had numerous subtle effects on plants and animals. In 1967, a geographer asked rhetorically whether there was any such thing as natural rainforest in Seasia. Humans have lived here for so long that “‘primary forest’ is a relative term, to be retained for convenience rather than as presupposing an entirely virginal tropical forest”.<sup>1</sup>

## Biodiversity and exchange networks

Seasia is home to more than 20 per cent of all known species. There are 35,000 species of flowering plants in Seasia (11,000 in Borneo alone), compared with 13,000 for all of tropical West Africa.<sup>2</sup> Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines are among 17 countries in the world classified as “mega-diverse”.<sup>3</sup> High diversity exerts intense pressure on organisms to develop highly specialized adaptations to narrow environmental niches.

The paradoxical result of this situation was that early humans in this region had to become generalists. Temperate areas have much lower diversity indexes. Humans who live in grasslands with many herd animals, or forests with dense stands of wild fruit trees, can maintain themselves by becoming adept at hunting or gathering a few types of food. Humans in the tropics face far more complex challenges. Around 5,000 years ago some people living at the north end of the Straits of Melaka did find dense concentrations of a specific resource: shellfish. They created large middens of discarded shells. Relatively large stands of wild rice may also have existed in some swampy areas. In general, however, early Seasians had to exploit many types of food scattered over large areas. They could not find enough sustenance in one particular area and so had to move regularly, although they probably circulated back and forth between a few locations in the same area which they eventually came to know in detail.

Eventually, exchange networks between different human groups developed in tandem with increasing specialization in exploitation of local resources. This specialization resulted in the creation of many groups, each with its own small area, who could only survive by maintaining exchange relations with other groups.

## SEASONALITY AND CULTURE

Flowering plants tend to develop annualism in areas where there are pronounced seasonal differences in rainfall or temperature. Humans may be more likely to become sedentary where critical resources are scarce at certain periods. Humans prefer to live in large groups or macrobands, which number 200 people or more. Seasonal shortages of food combined with this preference for life in large groups may have encouraged some people to have become heavily dependent on aquatic resources which are less affected by seasonality. This enabled people to maintain a more sedentary pattern of residence. Demographers have noted that sedentariness is usually followed by an increase in population, followed by concepts of private property, unequal access to scarce resources, social stratification, and ultimately, urbanism and state formation. Many scholars have proposed variations on this theme to explain why humans became sedentary, but their theories have not yet answered several important questions. One of these concerns the question of whether equatorial regions do not exert intense environmental stress, so that humans living in these regions do not develop residence in large groups unless these equatorial societies are affected by other societies residing outside the equatorial environment.

Ethnographic studies of Seasian hunter-gatherers support the hypothesis that seasonality is an important factor in the development of a sedentary lifestyle. In tropical Seasia (north and south of 5°

latitude) all ethnographically known hunter-gatherers were at least semi-nomadic. Bands did not move randomly, but circulated through specific ranges, camping repeatedly at the same sites.<sup>4</sup> Of the Seasian hunter-gatherers which Glover discussed, only the Kubu of Sumatra inhabit the equatorial region. No Kubu encampment larger than three to five huts (about 25–30 people) is known; this may be due to “lack of seasonality in the Sumatran climate”.<sup>5</sup> Humans using only hunting and gathering technology seem to have been unable to exploit the interiors of equatorial rainforests; their sites indicate that they were adapted to life along rivers or coasts. In the Andaman Islands, a seasonal environment, the greater the access to aquatic resources, the longer the period during which groups of people stay at specific sites. No such pattern seems to have evolved in the equatorial zone.

Archaeologists have found that larger, more permanent settlements appeared in mainland Seasia than on the islands. Investigation of the correlation between seasonality and differential rates of cultural innovation in Seasia may show us why this is true.

### Equatorial ecology and human adaptation

Geographers distinguish between “the rain-at-all seasons of the equatorial zone and the characteristic alternation of wet and dry seasons in the areas lying respectively to the north and south of it”.<sup>6</sup> The tropical zone stretching across Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and much of the northern Philippines experiences a dry season of at least three to six months.

In the Philippine archipelago there is wide variation in the volume of rainfall between the wettest and driest months, but the eastern side of the archipelago is more influenced by trade wind cycles in the Pacific Ocean than monsoons, and so has no true dry season. The western coasts by contrast form a corridor between the north and south monsoonal areas consisting of monsoon forests from Luzon to the Lesser Sunda Islands.<sup>7</sup>

Approximately 5,000 to 7,000 years ago, ancestors of modern speakers of Malayo-Polynesian languages (whom some archaeologists have termed the “Nusantao”) may have migrated through this corridor from Taiwan to eastern Indonesia, after which they split into two groups. One went east into the Pacific; the other went west and eventually reached Madagascar. Their original cultural traits had evolved to meet tropical conditions. Drought-tolerant plants may also have followed this route during the late Pleistocene, when the earth’s temperature was cooler. Equatorial rainforest may have shrunk to a few “cores” in elevated zones during the Ice Ages, whereas monsoonal conditions would have been general in the equatorial region.<sup>8</sup> It is unclear whether population pressure drove the Nusantao southward.

Within equatorial Seasia, numerous local variations in climate contradict the impression that the rain forest is a highly homogeneous ecological unit. For example, in the southern Malay peninsula, five rainfall regions have been found, differing both in total annual rainfall (ranging from less than 2,000 mm to more than 4,000 mm per year, usually because of topography), and in timing. These rainfall regions are correlated with three main classes and 25 subclasses of vegetation.<sup>9</sup>

While some plants flower all year around, these are mostly “pioneer species” which invade disturbed habitats. Most equatorial species do not flower constantly, but only at specific periods; thus wild fruit

is only plentiful at certain times of year. When food is abundant, some animals breed. Thus the lives of wild plants and animals have cycles in the equatorial zone, just as in the tropics.

This situation has implications for human adaptation. Most equatorial ecosystems are characterized by a high diversity index, meaning that there are relatively many types of plants and few individuals of any one species, making it difficult for humans to find enough food in a small area to support semi-sedentary macrobands; this has been termed a “fine-grained” pattern of resource distribution.<sup>10</sup> People can form macrobands at certain times of year when fruits are abundant, if they grow in restricted areas.

River mouths in prehistoric Seasia may have supported dense stands of perennial floating rice<sup>11</sup> which could have fed groups of 100 or more people for several months. This would have encouraged people to congregate in coastal areas at certain times of year, favouring seasonal transhumance between coasts and hinterlands. Only large sites exploited by macrobands along major waterways might leave enough remains to enable archaeologists to detect them. Artifacts of the Hoabinhian technocomplex have been found both in shell middens near old coastlines, and along stream banks in lower terraces in northeast Sumatra. This distribution may reflect seasonal migration between coasts and hinterlands.<sup>12</sup> One of the middens has yielded two radiocarbon dates, although neither is directly associated with artifacts. A midden provided a date of  $7340 \pm 360$  BP.<sup>13</sup> A piece of mangrove wood found at a depth of 2 meters just beside the midden has been dated at  $5055 \pm 65$  BP.<sup>14</sup> Seasonal population movements in South America led prehistoric people to move plants beyond their natural habitat.<sup>15</sup> This could have stimulated early plant domestication. If people utilizing artifacts of the Hoabinhian technocomplex exploited different environments at different seasons, this may have encouraged early plant domestication in Seasia.

The dual distribution of Hoabinhian sites in karstal uplands and coastal sites<sup>16</sup> is consistent with such a mechanism, but no research has been performed to investigate the differential numbers of sites in hinterlands (possibly corresponding to microbands) and coasts (potential macroband sites), nor the inception of plant domestication. Seasonal movements also can explain the multiplicity of lithic types in Seasia, which archaeologists assume represent discrete cultures. This high variability probably resulted from different tool kits in different environments at different times of year by a few groups, rather than the occupation of different territories by distinct ethnic groups. Seasonally occupied coastal sites dating from 3500 to 500 BP have been identified in northern Luzon.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps other sites already known were seasonally occupied as well; research necessary to settle this question has seldom been attempted. The “cultural mosaic” which Seasian ethnographers have identified may be a recent rather than an ancient phenomenon.

The equatorial environment is as stressful as a monsoonal climate. The higher rainfall of the equatorial zone does not mean that water is abundant at all times. While average annual rainfall is higher in the equatorial zone than in the tropics, annual variation in the equatorial zone is also very high. At Pontianak, west Kalimantan, almost precisely on the equator, the mean precipitation for 24 years between 1931 and 1960 for which data were recorded was 3,056 millimeters, but between 1960 and 1970 a minimum of 2,638 millimeters and a maximum of 4,912 millimeters were recorded. At Makassar, south Sulawesi, about 5° south latitude, mean rainfall is 2,697 millimeters, but extremes of 1,482 millimeters and 6,948 millimeters have been recorded.<sup>18</sup>

In Java, droughts during the colonial period caused large-scale population movements.<sup>19</sup> In South Sumatra, between 2° and 4° south latitude, one year in five experiences less than 2,000 millimeters of rain. “These years are the time of maximum ecological change and stress on the human population through crop failures, pest damage, lack of drinking water, and increased water-borne disease.”<sup>20</sup> Thus the incidence of rainfall, not sheer volume, dictates human activity.<sup>21</sup>

In most of equatorial Seasia the major form of upland cultivation is swiddening, which requires a dry period. A nineteenth-century account of the swiddening process in Bengkulu, southwest Sumatra (2°–3° south latitude) illustrates the consequences of unpredictable rainfall:

The padi is planted at the end of September and ripe at the beginning of March. Drought is required for ripening, and whenever that comes on time, out of ten *kulaks* of rice seed the farmer can put 1,500 in his storehouse. But if the rain falls before the felled wood is properly dry, then it cannot be sufficiently burned off and it is impossible to get everything out of the way in time. The weeds take over the soil before it is time to plant, and once they have the upper hand, then in that climate with its vigorous plant life it is a hopeless job to eliminate them sufficiently. The farmer may be satisfied if he collects a small harvest from one-third of his *ladang*. If on the contrary he burns his fallen timber too early and the rain does not fall soon, then the young growing seedlings wither; the ground not sodden and constantly exposed to heat is dry and hard and prohibits the roots from growing, and then too the weeds come and take the upper hand. If the drought comes when the grain is becoming ripe, the harvest may also be lost or the crop diminished. When dampness long persists, crowds of caterpillars frequently come to destroy the fields, while in long droughts one has the field mice to fear, besides the birds, monkeys, pigs, and elephants, all of which steal for themselves a part of the planter’s harvest.<sup>22</sup>

Other traditional subsistence activities also follow highly seasonal patterns in equatorial regions. For example, seasonal ponds or lakes known as *lebak* form in South Sumatra from overflow from the Ogan, Komering, and Musi Rivers during the rainy season. Flooding begins in November and the *lebak* fill to a depth of 2 to 3 meters. Five thousand hectares are permanently inundated, but during the period from November to April this increases to 500,000 hectares. These lakes are important sources of seasonally abundant food, including fish and rice. The Mahakam River around Kota Bangun, eastern Borneo, experiences a similar phenomenon.<sup>23</sup> Early Classic cultures formed in both areas.

Considering the unpredictability of nature, it is not surprising that humans who occupy different niches in the same habitat developed complementary exchange relationships in many parts of the world. In the northwest Amazon basin, on the equator, rainfall is heavy but exhibits great annual variation. Two groups inhabit the region: Maku, who live from hunting and gathering, and Tukanoa fishermen and horticulturalists. The Maku sometimes cannot collect enough starchy food. Tukanoans grow a surplus of a starchy tuber, but their main source of protein, fish, is scarce at certain seasons. The Tukanoans and Maku exchange food and labour at rates determined according to custom, creating a symbiotic relationship.<sup>24</sup> Agta hunter-gatherers and Palanan farmers in north Luzon developed a similar

relationship. The Palanan grow more starchy crops than they need in order to exchange some with Agta in return for protein from hunting, and labour. The rates of exchange between the Agta and Palanan are also fixed by custom.<sup>25</sup>

Customary exchanges of food and labour between groups occupying different ecological niches made survival of the two groups more likely. In Seasia, symbiotic relationships between coastal collectors and farmers were common.<sup>26</sup> The coastal groups ("Sea Nomads") employed strategies ranging from fully nomadic to mainly sedentary, but many exchanged labour and commodities obtained from foraging for agricultural commodities and imported status symbols from land dwellers. The Sea Nomads obtained sago, their main carbohydrate source, from agricultural communities.<sup>27</sup> At least one group, the Moken, held "large annual gatherings" analogous to macrobands.<sup>28</sup> This example shows that access to marine resources may favour the development of sedentariness, but not all maritime groups become sedentary. It has been postulated that post-Pleistocene intensification of aquatic resource exploitation was either a necessary or sufficient prerequisite for the Mesolithic in Europe,<sup>29</sup> but this cannot be assumed for Seasia.

It has been asserted that sago or taro growers would be unlikely to develop large-scale permanent settlements and ranked sociopolitical systems, because starch obtained from these sources cannot be stored; only societies planting seed crops such as rice would be able to advance to that level of complexity.<sup>30</sup> This is not strictly true. Sago can be stored.<sup>31</sup> Sago was even used to provision the ships of traditional Seasian navies; for instance, when a fleet from the lower Menam Chao Phraya Valley attacked Danmaxi (Singapore) in about 1330, its sailors ate sago rather than rice.<sup>32</sup>

It is difficult to explain why such symbiotic relationships between human groups occupying different niches arise. Seasian examples of complementary specialization persisted into the Postclassic period. When the Portuguese reached Maluku, they found that sago was being traded for fish, shell, stone, and forest products. Such exchange is able to "offset local short-term deficits and to supply areas of chronic shortages and total absence".<sup>33</sup> Numerous examples can be found in Melanesia, including the famous *kula*. Customary status symbol exchanges constituted both a homeostatic mechanism and an evolutionary advantage since emergency exchange of subsistence goods could be grafted onto the relationship. Thus niche specialization would evolve in tandem with reciprocity. Many studies have been devoted to the trade in such luxurious but non-utilitarian commodities as feathers, incense, and silks in Seasian history. Agricultural surplus is converted into storable wealth which can be used to establish reciprocal obligations with neighbouring peoples, who can be drawn on for supplies in case of emergency. If the objects are perishable like feathers, or burnt like incense, or buried like Chinese ceramics, they are removed from circulation, ensuring that these exchanges will continue.

Scholars disagree on the antiquity of ethnographically known exchange patterns. The similarity between traditional trade customs in the western Pacific and early Seasia, however, supports the inference that such practices were part of the original Nusantara culture.<sup>34</sup> Inter-regional trading systems probably existed in Seasia by the mid-Holocene.<sup>35</sup> Specialized strand collectors may have appeared as early as the second millennium BCE. Exotic maritime objects such as trochus shell reached the hinterland



site of Ban Na Di around 500 BCE.<sup>36</sup> Shells probably used as ornaments were brought to cave sites in the hinterland of the Malay Peninsula and Java in the mid-Holocene.

Most early Seasian trade centers were located in the equatorial region and are listed in historical sources as food importers, exchanging exotica for rice from tropical areas. In 1225 large quantities of rice were transported from Java to Sanfoqi (Jambi).<sup>37</sup> In the fourteenth century, Java's main exports were cotton, thread, woven fabrics, rice, salt, and other kinds of food.<sup>38</sup> Hunter-gatherer/farmer symbiosis was replicated on a larger scale.

### Genes, artifacts, and languages

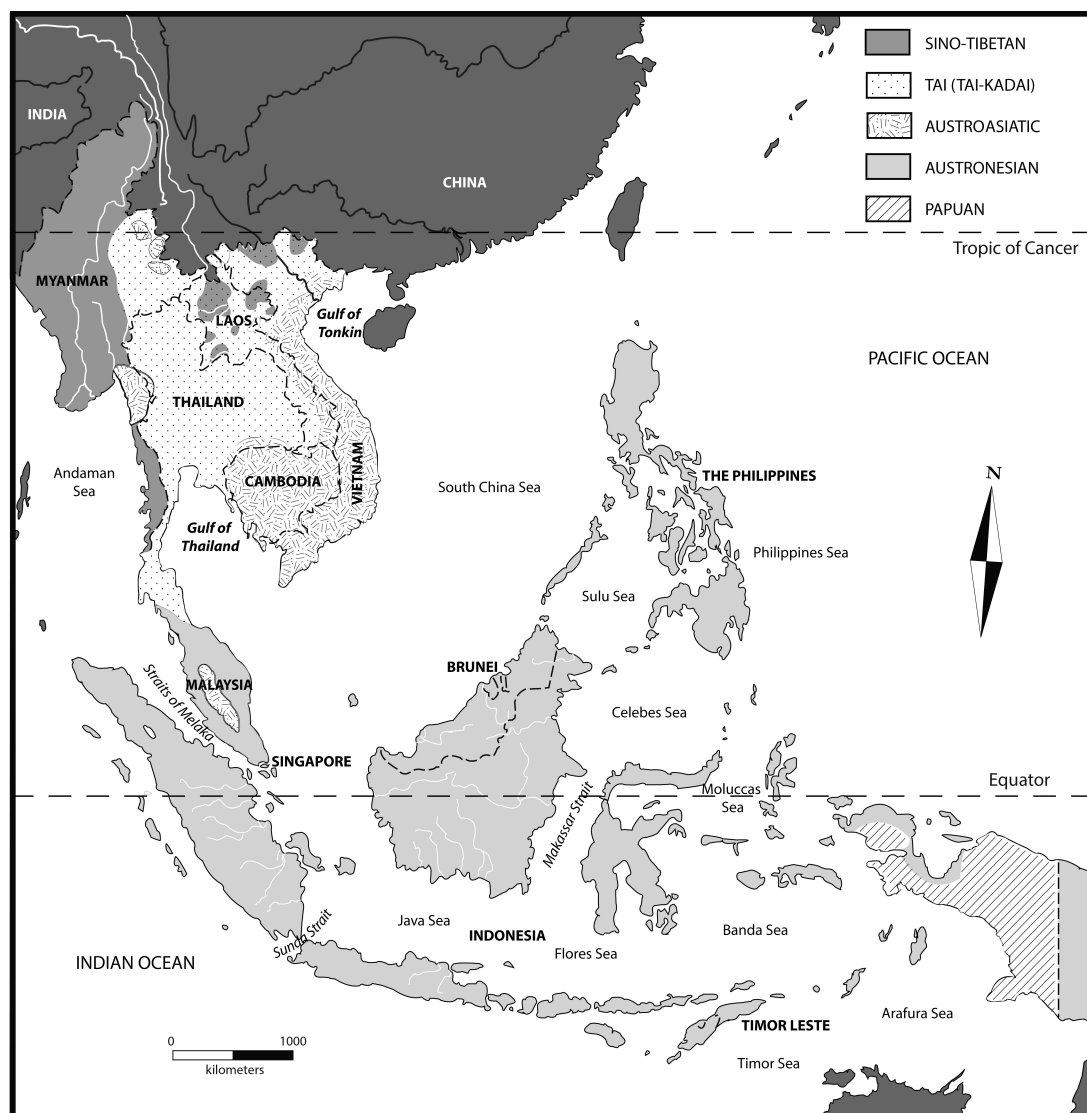
There has long been a dispute among archaeologists regarding the possibility of inferring language distribution from artifacts. In Seasia, certain types of artifacts such as stone tools and pottery closely mirror the distribution of modern-language families. It is, however, hazardous to argue that these artifact types were always highly correlated with language. As Blench<sup>39</sup> notes, the idea of the Indo-European language family arose first, paving the way for the concept of an Indo-European genetic group with specific types of artifacts. However, English, an Indo-European language, is spoken by many people with different DNA, religions, etc. There is a correlation between genes, artifacts, and languages, but it is not perfect. It is impossible to tell whether the correlation was higher or lower in the past. Genetic studies are making rapid advances, but the amount of data available for Seasia is small compared with other parts of the world.

### LANGUAGE DISTRIBUTION

At the beginning of the Classic period, at least three and probably four major language families were represented in Seasia (there may have been more, but this cannot be determined since data are limited to written sources). The most widely distributed family, Austronesian, is found in southeast Vietnam and Cambodia, Hainan (China), the Malay Peninsula, most of insular Seasia, and Taiwan; Madagascar in the western Indian Ocean, and throughout the Pacific. Nevertheless, Blench argues, there was probably a population consisting of genetically related people who started out as a homogeneous nucleus before undertaking long-distance voyages, distributing elements of their material culture and DNA over a wide area, while simultaneously absorbing DNA and art styles from the people with whom they interacted. Blench marshals the evidence from linguistics, history, and archaeology in favour of the hypothesis that the Austronesian speakers had significant contact with Japan, Australia, India, Sri Lanka, islands in the Indian Ocean besides Madagascar, Africa, and South America.<sup>40</sup>

A second linguistic grouping is known as the Austroasiatic phylum, of which Mon-Khmer is the largest subgrouping. Languages of this group are spoken in what is now Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, peninsular Malaysia, eastern India and southern China. Linguists group it as part of the Austroasiatic phylum.<sup>41</sup> Languages of the Melanesian family are spoken in West Papua New Guinea and other islands





**Figure 2.2** Linguistic distribution in Seasia

in far eastern Indonesia and Australia. Melanesian and Austronesian have been in contact for a long time, and have exchanged vocabulary with each other. One language called Pyu, known from inscriptions, is thought to have been a member of the Tibeto-Burman family but it has never been deciphered. The language and its speech community were probably absorbed by the Burmese, whose language began to be written in the late tenth or early eleventh century.

Tai-Kadai, including the language spoken in modern Thailand, as well as other languages in Myanmar, Laos, and south China, is first attested in Seasia in the thirteenth century. The word “Thai” is used

as the designation for the citizens of Thailand, who trace their descent from various ethnic origins; “Tai” is used to designate those who consider themselves part of a socio-linguistic or ethnic group which entered Thailand from south China in the thirteenth century. This linguistic complexity should make apparent the difficulty in disentangling various sorts of identities in Seasia.

### Subregions and mandalas

The ancient history of Seasia is replete with references to regions covering a few hundred to a few thousand square kilometers which at times formed independent, loosely knit polities, at other times were affiliated with several other polities through acknowledgement of a common overlord. It is difficult to verify rulers’ claims that they controlled one or more other centers. What did “control” mean? It could range from the abduction of entire populations as slaves, to the provision of soldiers in wartime, to extraction of tribute and taxes, to obligatory annual trips to another ruler at which emissaries would bow and acknowledge symbolic subordination, to respectful exchanges of letters. Usually when one subregion was defeated by another, the conquered ruler of the subregion would be reconfirmed as chief of his district upon making suitable obeisance to his new overlord. The dispatch of governors from one subregion to another was very rare in Seasian history, but important exceptions to this rule are found in Angkor and Kedah.

This system had advantages for both parties. The new vassals continued to hold high status in their realms, and the new overlords did not have to shoulder the burden of administering new areas. The necessity of preserving local knowledge of resources in a diverse habitat to maintain subsistence and exchange relationships with neighbours provided motivation not to rock the boat.

Archaeology cannot provide meaningful assistance to efforts to define political hierarchies. Written sources mainly refer to religious affairs, and imply that rulers were “men of prowess”<sup>42</sup> who gained power over others through spiritual qualities. It is likely that other factors including coercion were also involved, but allusions to it were not appropriate. The ideal ruler was a *cakravartin*, “wheel-turner” in Sanskrit, who literally kept the world spinning with his ineffable qualities. Wheel-turners could maintain their status by increasing the number of surrounding subregions who paid tribute to them in materials, services, or ceremonially.

These subregions could be equated with mandalas. They were defined by their centers, which were where the wheel-turners lived, rather than their borders, which could expand and contract by attracting or threatening the smaller centers around them to declare loyalty, thus lending the higher-level rulers further legitimacy. The rulers of lower-level centers could acknowledge the superiority of the higher-level centers either out of fear of attack, the promise of reciprocal political support, or a desire to becoming connected with a network of communication and economic exchange. The latter motivation is potentially susceptible to archaeological verification. No doubt a mixture of considerations was involved in the calculations of those leaders who had the power to speak and act on behalf of their units, which were probably collections of villages.<sup>43</sup> (For more discussion of the term *mandala*, see “The mandala model”, Chapter 5.)

## Settlement pattern studies in Seasia

Unfortunately, settlement pattern archaeology has made little progress in Seasia. Historical sources afford little assistance. Often the same name was used to refer to the palace, the capital, and the kingdom. Geographer Paul Wheatley has written the most extensive study of the "Seasian urban tradition". He did not study cities as such; his main subject was the formation of redistributive networks administered by sacred centers (temples). He characterized Seasian urban traditions as derived from India (the *negara*) or the commandery (from China, applying to northern Vietnam). He produced a map of Seasia in the fourteenth century<sup>44</sup> which depicts a three-tier hierarchy of political centers. The text of the book does not discuss the map, but most of the centers plotted on the map are ceremonial sites, evidence for the existence of which consists of temples or inscriptions. The hierarchies and locations of centers therefore have no implications for centers of political control (palaces), military power (forts), economic exchange (markets), or production of commodities (workshops).<sup>45</sup>

All of these factors (political, military, economic, religious, and productive) are associated in various ways with the development of centers of population. The proportion of the influence of each factor on settlement pattern development has varied considerably between different parts of Seasia at different times. It is, however, possible to impose some order on the welter of data by producing two types of synthetic analysis. One is statistical: plotting the sites in terms of size (number of tiers in a hierarchy); the other is to group these factors to produce a scale along which settlements are organized (orthogenetic/heterogenetic).

Archaeologists have used the rank-size hierarchy to infer cultural complexity for several decades.<sup>46</sup> The method uses a logarithmic scale to plot sites on a graph according to their size. One of the requirements of this method is the definition of an area which is assumed to form a cultural unit. Another is the acquisition of data on settlement sizes of the same period using a standard method. Application of this method to more Seasian cases would significantly strengthen the quality of data which could be used to analyze the development of complex society in Seasia. It is relatively simple in theory, although in practice it requires considerable resources to implement.

The orthogenetic/heterogenetic paradigm<sup>47</sup> distinguishes between two types of cities: those which have few functions, usually administrative and ceremonial, and those which have many functions, perhaps including all five of those previously listed. Orthogenetic cities such as Angkor and Bagan are usually marked by large monuments, and are found in societies which emphasize inherited status and stability. Heterogenetic cities are often trading centers such as seaports. Archaeological evidence for their existence is more difficult to find; it usually consists of large quantities of manufactured items such as pottery, with few or no large permanent structures. Social mobility is more common in societies with heterogenetic cities, and can often be acquired through individual effort and accumulation of wealth.

It is not admissible to assign historical examples of cities to one category or the other, because some trade occurred in even the most orthogenetic societies, and temples existed in most or all heterogenetic cities. The best solution to the problem would be to devise a means of ranking cities on a scale in which, for example, 1 would be completely orthogenetic, and 10 would be perfectly heterogenetic. Probably all empirical examples would be ranked somewhere between these two polar opposites.

Data which could be used to address these questions in Seasia are very scarce and spotty in distribution. The discussions of concrete examples in this book are therefore based on incomplete data and all conclusions are therefore subject to revision when more information becomes available. The contents of succeeding chapters are partly a summary of what has been accomplished to date, and partly a series of suggestions for future research priorities.

### **Topography: The sea unites, the land divides**

The old cliché of Seasian studies “The sea unites, the land divides” still has much to recommend it. Much of Seasian cultural evolution can be seen as a dialogue between areas along rivers and estuaries, and those beyond the reach of people using boats. Varieties of Malay were used as a trade language over an area spanning 5,000 kilometers, while neighbouring communities in valleys a few kilometers apart often had difficulty understanding one another’s speech. Societies in plains evolved expansionistic regimes which often attempted to incorporate nearby fragmented highland groups by force, while the inhabitants of hinterland slopes did their best to maintain their identity. Both sides needed each other for purposes of trade; as noted, interaction spheres evolved in prehistory which welded the two sides together in reciprocal relationships of trade and ceremony. These relationships were often tinged with tension, usually because of attempts by lowland polities to subjugate highlanders in order to gain both their people and their commodities.

Another regularity which appears in the region throughout the Classic period is the dichotomy between lowland trading ports and hinterland agrarian kingdoms.<sup>48</sup> The settlement patterns and social configurations which characterized these different types of habitat parallel the orthogenetic/heterogenetic distinction.

### **SUBREGIONS OF THE TROPICAL MAINLAND: DEFINING SUBREGIONS**

This section outlines the historically significant subregions in Seasia. This is a preliminary attempt to accomplish a task which O.W. Wolters contemplated when he posed this question for Srivijaya: “If archaeologists and others eventually succeed in defining particular advantages of the Musi terrain, what would we then learn about the human agency in the local culture responsible for developing the advantages and making these particular ‘spatially restricted nuclei’ cohere?” We are attempting to answer his question on a regional scale. Future scholars will refine this mosaic. The definition of “subregion” adopted here is a working one: it is based on the identification of clusters of archaeological remains of similar style and period within an area of relatively uniform ecological conditions. This division into subregions is meant to provide an image of Southeast Asia as a mosaic, but with edges which are fuzzy rather than hard, and which combine to create a unique geographical entity consisting of shared cultural and environmental features which evolved during the Classic period. The constellation of local identities which evolved 2,000 years ago is now (in 2016) in the process of weakening, but is still quite influential in such events as local elections and protest movements.

The range of artifacts which can be used to define subregions is limited to those which are durable. Textiles and tattoos might have been the most relevant markers of subregional identities to people who lived here in the Classic era, but these sources are not available to us. Ceramics are another viable candidate for this role, given the ubiquity of that material and its susceptibility to the development of local artistic motifs. Unfortunately, Seasian ceramics have not yet been given the attention from archaeologists that they deserve.

At this time, Seasian subregions of the Classic period are most clearly defined by artifacts associated with the elite rather than the masses: statues, jewellery, temples, and inscriptions. Elite culture has a tendency to be shared over broad areas; elite art styles and attitudes may delineate communication networks rather than bounded zones marked by local cultural identities. The small number of elite items poses the danger of sampling bias.

Seasian subregions can be divided into four types: mainland river basins, mainland highlands, insular lowlands, and insular highlands. These types of subregions share some features, partly as the result of environmental similarities, partly because of historical connections between them. These subregions often thought of themselves as mandalas, and sometimes coalesced to form larger mandalas. The level of integration within mandalas tended to wax and wane, sometimes according to the coercive power of the main subregion of the mandala, sometimes because of the charisma, or *sakti*, of its leader, but most often as a result of self-interest in being part of a larger economic unit in a region where membership in a network was usually a key to prosperity and security. Isolation from a network exposed a subregion to both human and environmental threats. The same principle applied on the level of interpersonal relations.

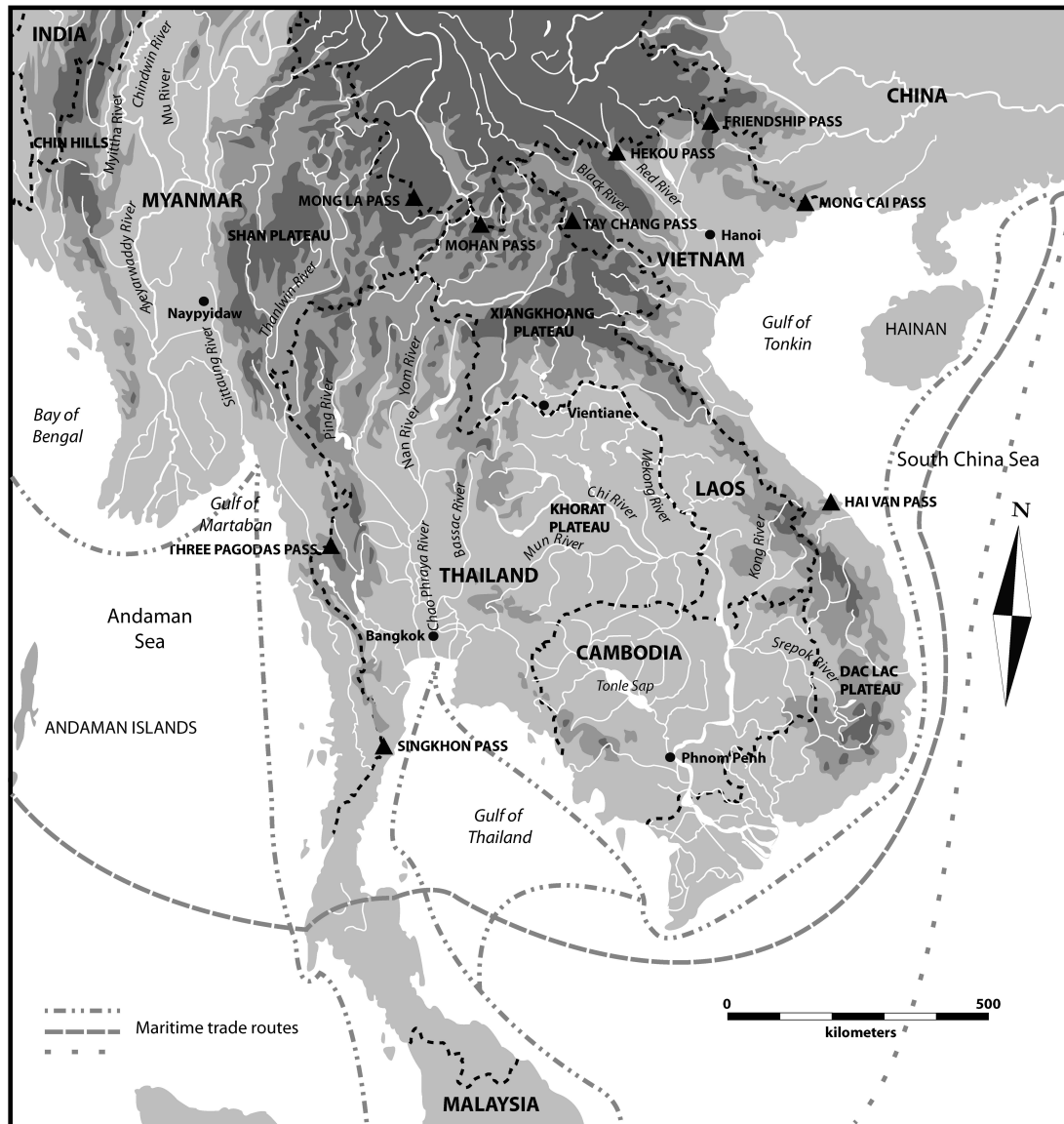
## SUBREGIONS OF SEASIA

### Type 1: Mainland river systems: Chao Phraya, Ayeyarwadi, Mekong, and Red

Large river systems are one of the major geographical features of mainland Seasia. The four longest (Red River, 1,149 km; Ayeyarwadi (Irrawaddy), 2,170 km; Salween, 2,400 km, and Mekong, 4,350 km) all flow into Seasia from China. The Chao Phraya is much shorter (372 km) but just as important in historical terms as the others. None of these rivers is a single subregion; unlike the Yellow River in China, major rivers in Southeast Asia have not functioned as unifiers (Figure 2.3).

### Subregions along the Mekong

The Mekong is the twelfth longest river in the world. Its English name comes from Khmer *Mekong*, or Thai *Mae Nam Kong* (Mother Water). It rises at an elevation of almost 5,000 meters on the Tibetan Plateau, and flows through Yunnan before entering Southeast Asia at the border of China, Myanmar, and Laos. It discharges 457 cubic kilometers of water into the South China Sea daily, the third most in Asia, after the Yangzi and the Ganges. A total of 15 to 20 per cent of the water in the river and 50 per cent



**Figure 2.3** River systems of mainland Seasia

of the sediment comes from the upper basin in China. The lower Mekong is reckoned to begin where the river leaves China. The lower Mekong region is larger than France. The Mekong drains an area of 795,000 square kilometers: 202,000 (the largest part) in Laos, 184,000 in Thailand, 165,000 in China, 155,000 in Cambodia, 65,000 in Vietnam, and 24,000 in Myanmar.

The Mekong has few tributaries, the largest being the Mun and Chi in northeast Thailand. No major Classical period cities ever grew along its banks. It is unsuitable for navigation. The Sambor Rapids,



which begin about 15 kilometers north of Kratie, Cambodia, and extend for more than 12 kilometers, make boat traffic between the lower and upper stretches of the river impossible. At the Khone Falls in southern Laos the river divides into many courses distributed over a width of 15 kilometers. More rapids are found in several sections north of this point. At Phnom Penh the Mekong enters a huge delta 400 kilometers long. By the time it reaches the sea, it has divided into six distributaries, all of which are shallow and impassable for large ships.

In the spring, melting snow in China combined with heavy rainfall causes the Mekong at Phnom Penh to rise by nearly 10 meters. At that time of year, the current in the Tonle Sap River, the outlet for the Tonle Sap or Great Lake in the center of Cambodia, reverses its course. In June, part of the Mekong flows into the lake, which then expands greatly, gently inundating its surrounding area and driving a highly productive aquacultural regime. The delta becomes a vast complex of shallow swamps and ponds during this season. The biodiversity of the Mekong is second among rivers of the world only to the Amazon. Besides fish, crabs, water snakes, fresh-water shrimps, turtles, and frogs are important in the diet of those who live near the delta.<sup>49</sup>

## **LOWER MEKONG: NORTHERN PORTION**

### **Foothills of the Seasian massif**

The southern piedmont which leads up to the Himalayas fostered several important subcenters of population and archaeological remains in the Late Classic period. These developments were closely connected with the descent into the lowlands of groups of Tais from the north. On reaching the lowland basins of the Chao Phraya and Mekong, they found excellent locations where they could exploit the combined resources of the higher and lower elevations. Once ensconced on the southern flanks of the massif, newly formed kingdoms achieved prosperity through overland trade routes with Yunnan. In the Postclassic period the northern foothills were gradually cut off from these routes: on the lowland side by the kingdom of Ayutthaya, and on the highland side by the expansion of Chinese power.

### **KHORAT PLATEAU**

The Khorat Plateau occupies one third of Thailand, almost as large an area as the entire nation of Cambodia. Khorat constitutes 15 per cent of the entire Mekong basin. The plateau, an average of 150 meters above sea level, receives about 1,000 millimeters of rainfall per year, but because of a high evaporation rate it is semi-arid, with sandy alkaline soil of low fertility. The western edge of the plateau forms a steep escarpment which is quite obvious when one crosses it by road on the way to Bangkok.

All of Khorat either lies on the banks of the Mekong or is linked to it via the Mun and Chi Rivers. In the 1960s less than 7 per cent of the plateau was farmed, mainly by shifting cultivators. For most of the Classic period, the majority of Khorat's population lived near the junctions of the Mekong and



these two tributaries. There is no evidence that rice was grown intensively in Khorat during the Classic period, except at the fringes of the seasonal swamps, where fish are also relatively plentiful during certain times of the year.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, some very important Classic sites were constructed there. The Classic remains are related to those of the lower Mekong, not the Chao Phraya. Phimai in the plateau's southwest corner was a second major population center. Until recently, much of the Mun basin consisted of seasonal marshes created when high Mekong levels caused the river to overflow its banks, forming natural levees which prevented the floodwater from quickly returning to the main river. Salt deposited when the back swamps evaporated was collected and traded to Yunnan and central Thailand.<sup>51</sup> There is archaeological evidence that this trade began in prehistory. This salt is still harvested for sale. The savannah-like scrub created by the seasonal flooding was said to have been nearly impenetrable.<sup>52</sup> Gold, copper, and iron are found in granites along the western side of the plateau, and were exploited in the Preclassic period.

### **The North Cambodian subregion**

The majority of ancient Cambodia's people lived near the Tonle Sap. Rainfall in most of Cambodia varies between 1,000 and 1,500 millimeters, most of which falls during six months of the year. Cambodia is so flat that water drains very gently into slow-moving rivers, and eventually into the Mekong.

Sediment deposited by the Mekong fertilizes Cambodia. Cambodia's bedrock is largely made of sandstone, which contains few nutrients or minerals. This sedimentary rock, sometimes called Indosinia by geologists, contains the oldest rocks in Southeast Asia, dating to the Precambrian. Iron, the main useful mineral found in Cambodia, is found in the northeast, as are some gemstones. Gold sources have been found in recent years, but there is no evidence that the ancient Khmer knew of or exploited them.

The northern border of Cambodia is formed by the Dangrek Mountains, which rise to an average elevation of 500 meters. This border has become contentious because when it was drawn during the colonial period, the French deviated from the sharp southern edge of the escarpment in order to include a Khmer temple, Preah Vihear, in their Indochina colony. This has been a source of international tension in recent times. A further complication is that the Dangrek Mountains were not a barrier between Khmer and non-Khmer people; Khmer speakers lived on both sides of the range. Khmer speakers were the main inhabitants of Khorat during the Classic era. One of the most important ruling families of Angkor, the Mahidharapura dynasty, came from this area. The temple of Phimai may have been the model for Cambodia's iconic monument, Angkor Wat. This is just one example of an instance where modern political borders in Southeast Asia do not correspond to historical subregions. The population of the Khorat Plateau still includes many Khmer speakers.

Cambodia and neighbouring areas have traditionally communicated by land. Northwest of the Tonle Sap, the land rises very gradually for hundreds of kilometers. One of the ancient Khmer roads ran in this direction. A second road built during the Classic period led east, to the Khmer temple of Wat Phu in what is now southern Laos. From there a traditional pathway led across the Annamite Cordillera to the Vietnam lowlands (see later discussion and also "Early Classic Cambodia", Chapter 5).

The modern capital, Phnom Penh, is located at Chhatomukh (Four Faces), which the French used to call the Quatre Bras (Four Arms), because four branches of the Mekong meet here. The first arm is the Tonle Sap (literally “Great River of Fresh Water”). Downstream from Phnom Penh, the river splits into two main arms, the Mekong’s main channel and the Bassac, on the west.

The most fascinating feature of Cambodia’s ecology is the annual inundation of a considerable proportion of the lands along the Mekong. Like that of the Nile River, the Mekong’s flooding is not destructive, because the water moves so slowly. For six months of the year, the Tonle Sap forms the outlet of the lake of the same name. In May or June, however, the Mekong becomes swollen with rain from the monsoon, and with water from melting snow in the Himalayas. The level of the Mekong’s surface at Phnom Penh rises higher than the level of the lake. As a result, part of the Mekong’s water flows northwest, into the lake. The Tonle Sap’s outlet thus has the unusual attribute of reversing its flow every year: from the lake into the river between approximately December to May, from the river to the lake for the other six months of the year. The lake shrinks to 2,500 square kilometers at its lowest point, and grows to five or six times that size at its greatest extent. The Mekong giant catfish (*Pangasianodon gigas*), the world’s largest freshwater fish, lives in the lake as well as in the Mekong’s main channel. In 2012 more than a million people depended on fishing on the Tonle Sap for a living. Fishing contributes 16 per cent of Cambodia’s entire GDP.<sup>53</sup>

The Tonle Sap expands and contracts like a beating heart – a good metaphor for its role in fostering one of the great civilizations of classical Seasia. Like ancient Egypt, one could say that Angkor was the gift of annual floods. The ancient Khmer exploited this situation to create a highly productive agricultural system which could not have existed anywhere else. The importance of water in Classical Khmer life is clear from the way it dominated their art. Reliefs of the Bayon temple depict many scenes set on the lake.

## The Mekong Delta

Like the other great rivers of mainland Southeast Asia, the Mekong flows into a huge delta covering approximately 10,000 square kilometers through six main mouths. Tides extend nearly 100 kilometers inland. The coastline is rapidly prograding because of sedimentation. In 1966 the rate of growth was 60 meters per year.<sup>54</sup>

The ethnicity of the people who lived in the Mekong Delta in ancient times cannot be ascertained. The distribution of ethnic groups may well have resembled that of the mid-twentieth century; Khmer speakers lived on higher ground, while the lower-lying areas were occupied by Vietnamese speakers.<sup>55</sup> During the Classic period, Malayo-Polynesian speakers may have occupied the niche later occupied by the Vietnamese. This subregion had a glorious but brief prominence during the Protoclassic era. A kingdom known to the Chinese controlled the delta and created Protoclassic Seasia’s most sophisticated settlement. This culture and polity collapsed at the beginning of the Early Classic period, and thereafter the delta disappeared from history. No later major centers of population or trade appeared there to replace Funan.

## Chao Phraya

Chao Phraya means “Grand Duke”. This river flows into the Gulf of Thailand via a delta which extends 150 kilometers upstream. The Chao Phraya’s watershed of 160,000 square kilometers, including the basins of its two main tributaries, the Ping and Nan, covers 35 per cent of Thailand. The river’s source, at the junction of the Ping and Nan rivers 372 kilometers from the sea, is only 25 meters above sea level. The Ping and Nan are both longer than the Chao Phraya; both start at Thailand’s northern border. The Ping is 658 kilometers long, has a basin of 44,688 square kilometers and rises at 1,700 meters. The Nan is 740 kilometers long and rises at 1,240 meters. Its basin covers 57,947 square kilometers.

Unlike the Mekong, the Chao Phraya has been the mother of most of Thailand’s ancient capitals and other important cities on the main stream or its tributaries. These include Nakhon Sawan, located where the Nan and Yom join the main stream; Chainat, 40 kilometers further downstream, where the river starts to braid into distributaries, the largest of which retains the name Chao Phraya; Singburi, the Tai pronunciation of Singapura, an important center of the Angkor period; and Ayutthaya, for 416 years a royal capital, built where the Pasak joins the Chao Phraya. The Pasak may once have been an old course of the Mekong. The river is tidal as far as Ayutthaya.

The lower course of the Chao Phraya has changed significantly in the past 700 years; in the fourteenth century the main stream was the Thachin, now a secondary distributary which enters the Gulf at Samut Sakhon, 35 kilometers west of the Chao Phraya.<sup>56</sup> Besides the Chao Phraya, other rivers make their way across the delta, including the Mae Klong which flows into the Gulf of Thailand from Ratburi 50 kilometers west of Bangkok. The highest natural points in the delta are levees about a meter high.

Rainfall in this region is less than 1,500 millimeters per year, whereas 1,750 millimeters is considered the minimum necessary for rain-fed rice fields. The rest of the required moisture had to come from flooding – a pattern which was common in many Seasian rivers. Data from Thailand demonstrate that dependence on flood irrigation could be hazardous. One hundred years of data show that in 55 years flooding was either optimal or barely adequate. Insufficient flooding occurred once every three years, and too much water arrived once every six years.<sup>57</sup> In years when flooding was below minimum, more than 40 per cent of the rice crop could fail.

The main centers of archaeological remains during the Early and Middle Classic periods lay in what is now northern Thailand. These centers were linked by overland routes to Yunnan and the Shan Plateau, rather than to the South China Sea. It has been theorized that the delta was open sea until recently, but the discovery of a ninth-century shipwreck in the western part of the delta, and geomorphological research, have shown that the delta was probably a swamp but not open water during the Classic period.<sup>58</sup> A number of important Early Classic sites linked to Dvaravati culture have been found around the delta’s rim; they were not on the sea coast at the time, but they were at the edge of the area which was subject to flooding.

## Ayeyarwadi (Irrawaddy)

The Ayeyarwadi possesses what is probably Southeast Asia’s longest uninterrupted stretch of navigable river – some 1,500 kilometers. The river starts at the town of Myitkyina, where two streams carrying

melted snow from the Himalayas join. Its first section, from Myitkyina to Bhamo, 240 kilometers long, passes through several gorges. At Bhamo the river leaves mountains and enters the plain, though the river still passes through one more gorge before it reaches Katha, north of Mandalay. Here the river enters the true Dry Zone, which reaches Bago. The lower floodplain is constricted by the Bago Yoma (mountain range) on the east and the Western Mountain range which runs parallel to the river all along its border with Bangladesh. This range, the highest peak of which is Mount Sarametti, about 4,000 meters high, forms an effective barrier to communication. This frontier zone is particularly malarial. The main pass across the range is the Manipur Highlands through the Hukawng Valley, which has been the main channel of overland trade and communication between Seasia and South Asia (Sasia). At Bago, the Ayeyarwadi Delta begins, and the main river splits into many distributaries.

The Ayeyarwadi captures close to 70 per cent of all the runoff of Myanmar. Its main tributaries, the Chindwin and the Samon, are found in the north-central part of the river's course. The Samon seems to have been an important source of cultural innovation during the Preclassic period.<sup>59</sup> In an earlier phase of geological development, the upper course of what is now the Ayeyarwadi belonged to the Sittaung. At some time the Ayeyarwadi captured the Sittaung's upper valley, leaving the Sittaung as a subsidiary parallel river. Mandalay drew its importance in Myanmar culture from the site's proximity to both the Ayeyarwadi and the upper Sittaung (the sources of the Samon and the Sittaung are only a few kilometers apart).

The Ayeyarwadi basin roughly follows the path of a north-south fault line which occasionally becomes active. The most recent major earthquake along this fault occurred in 1976, and resulted in serious damage to the Middle Classic monuments of Bagan. This earthquake may have been the most powerful one felt in the area since their construction. There are remains of ancient volcanic activity along this line, especially in the lower Chindwin. Mount Popa, 1,600 meters tall, one of the most prominent of these ancient volcanoes, has a spectacular volcanic plug on its west slope which is a major center for worship of the *nats*, local spirits.

A previous generation of geologists and prehistorians interpreted alluvial deposits along the course of the Ayeyarwadi as terraces created at certain times by the down cutting of the river, and tried to date tools classified as Palaeolithic by the relative ages of the terraces on which they were found. It is now known that these terraces were created by a number of different factors and cannot be accurately dated by a single method.<sup>60</sup>

### The Dry Zone of central Myanmar

Central Myanmar is a Dry Zone unique in Seasia, created by twin rain shadows of the Western Yoma and the Shan Plateau. This Dry Zone extends 100 kilometers up the Chindwin, as far as Mandalay on the Ayeyarwadi, and 100 kilometers south of the Chindwin/Ayeyarwadi junction. Annual rainfall in this zone is between 500 and 1,000 millimeters; because of a high rate of evaporation, no permanent bodies of standing water exist there.

The Ayeyarwadi has no major tributaries downstream from the Chindwin, and the river's gradient is very gentle from this point on: Mandalay, 750 kilometers from the ocean, is only 60 meters above sea

level. Most of the rest of the country experiences 1,000 to 2,000 millimeters of rainfall per year. The delta area receives about 2,000 to 2,500 millimeters annually; Rakhine and the west coast of peninsular Myanmar receive 3,000 to 3,500 millimeters a year. This rainfall is highly seasonal, mostly falling from May to September. Contrary to what one might expect, the majority of important historic archaeological sites is found in the Dry Zone. This is one of several early centers of Seasian Classic culture which arose in areas of low agricultural productivity. This pattern is paralleled by the Maya area of tropical Mesoamerica.

Most of the major sites of the early Classic period in the Dry Zone are found at some distance from the main river course, rather than along its banks. There is no evidence that the Ayeyarwadi was used for ancient irrigation; the significant annual rise and fall of the river and its broad floodplain probably made it impossible to tap this source with the limited amount of manpower available. The early Classic groups must have been able to use tributaries or to create reservoirs of some type for storing water. No evidence has yet been found for major water management schemes (though there are hints that some perhaps were implemented at the Early Classic site of Sri Ksetra); perhaps their methods were subtle and did not leave major traces on the soil.

In any case, the population of the Dry Zone seems to have developed methods for producing a considerable agricultural surplus in the Protoclassic period. A particular soil type called "black cotton soil" is found along the Chindwin, at Monywa, around Shwebo, and in the central Dry Zone. It is sticky and not easy to work, but holds moisture well and may have provided arable land for early Classic people. It is also possible that the progenitors of the Classic culture of central Myanmar brought cultivation techniques from farther north, which were suitable for low-rainfall cultivation rather than for the wetter region further downstream.

Traditional agriculture in the Dry Zone like that of today was probably based on mixed farming rather than extensive rice monoculture. Perhaps a millennium ago, the Kyaukse area in the lower Samon plain south of Mandalay became a major rice-growing area, but no major centers of Early Classic culture have been found there, though Hudson<sup>61</sup> believes that Early Classic Bagan owed its ultimate origins to the Samon region. The traditional agricultural system of Kyaukse in the Myitnge valley seems to have been based on small distributary systems rather than large centralized networks or reservoirs.<sup>62</sup> The dry climate may also have facilitated the rearing of cattle. Dry conditions enable farmers to store their crops for longer periods, and may also discourage infestations of insects and blights. Other large rice-growing areas in the nearby Mu valley north of Shwebo and the Minbu district appear to have existed for several centuries at least.<sup>63</sup>

The question of why the Dry Zone became a major center of Classic Seasian civilization has tantalized many scholars. One normally assumes that greater rainfall will be associated with greater agricultural surplus and dense populations. As in other parts of Seasia, the deltas of Myanmar rivers were not exploited for agriculture during the Classic period, though they certainly provided wild food and materials. The answer(s) remain to be discovered, but it is clear that in Myanmar as elsewhere in Seasia there is a strong correlation among climate, vegetation, topography, and archaeological cultures. Areas up to 50 meters in elevation tend to be inhabited by people of a few main ethnolinguistic identities; areas above 50 meters are inhabited by representatives of many different identities. It is probable that this pattern existed during the Classic period, though the names and identifying characteristics of the various groups may well have been different from those observed when ethnographic data began to be compiled. No doubt Myanmar experienced numerous migrations during the late prehistoric and early

historic periods, like the rest of Seasia, but it is unlikely that the specific currents of movement will ever be reconstructed. Artifacts and people can and do distribute themselves according to different patterns. We cannot infer the locations of languages from artifacts except in very general terms.

### **Rakhine (Arakan)**

This coastal strip 300 kilometers long and less than 50 kilometers wide lies between the Arakan Yoma (mountain range) and the sea. Rakhine and the west coast of the peninsular region are the wettest parts of Myanmar, receiving 3,000 to 3,500 millimeters a year. In topography it resembles the southern Vietnamese littoral: it is crossed by a number of short rivers, one of which (the Kaladan) leads to the Postclassic site of Mrauk-U. Some of the oldest remains of the Protoclassic period in Seasia have also been found along its course. These remains are typologically similar to those found in the Ayeyarwadi basin. Rakhine is isolated on its landward side but has been on maritime sailing routes between India and Seasia for millennia. It is an important subregion, with archaeological sites and historical sources both indigenous and foreign which provide critical knowledge of the effects of long-term maritime contacts. The majority of the population of Rakhine are Buddhist and speak an archaic version of Myanmar language, so one may conclude that they have been there for a long time.

### **Red River**

Much of the basin of the Songkoi, or Red River, which flows into the South China Sea near Hanoi is narrow, hemmed in by steep gorges until it reaches a broad flatland about 200 kilometers from the sea. One of its most important tributaries, the Songbo, or Black River, joins it just before the head of the delta 150 kilometers upstream. Despite this rather restricted breadth, during seasonal floods the volume of the water in the river can be twice as great as that of the Nile.<sup>64</sup> The delta plus a narrow strip of coastal lowland extending for about 200 kilometers to the south cover an area of 10,000 square kilometers. This zone formed the Tonkin subregion. The Chinese conquered this zone in the third century BCE and incorporated it into their empire for 1,000 years. That they did not press on along the coast to what became Champa is interesting; factors of ecology or ethnicity (or both) perhaps dissuaded them from doing so. In modern times, and probably in ancient times too, to judge from archaeological remains, the Red River Delta has been one of the most densely populated regions in Vietnam, while the Mekong Delta has been one of the most sparsely populated zones. Why this should be true is difficult to determine.<sup>65</sup>

### **South Vietnam littoral**

The South Vietnam littoral subregion stretches for 800 kilometers from the Col des Nuages to Camranh Bay, just north of the Mekong Delta. It is separated from the Tonkin subregion by about 300 kilometers, which seems to have been a buffer zone between Vietnamese and Cham subregions; this zone itself may



have been a subregion during the Protohistoric period, connected with the Chinese designation Lin Yi.<sup>66</sup> This littoral is crossed by several short rivers which create limited floodplains where rice can be grown. Several of these became centers of “sub-subregions” – concentrations of archaeological monuments and inscriptions which were related by the use of Cham and Sanskrit language and a common art style, mainly Hindu but with some Buddhism. The principal centers were Singapura near Danang, Vijaya near Binh Dinh, and Po Nagar at Nha Trang. The absence of important Cham sites in the Mekong Delta is a curious fact, since Funan, the most important kingdom in Protohistoric Southeast Asia, had been located there. This suggests but does not prove that the people of Funan were not closely related to the Cham. The idea that Funan was the foundation for Champa has been advanced by some reputable scholars.<sup>67</sup>

## Type 2: The mainland massif

Although Seasia has no clear maritime border, the land border of the region is formed by a continuous arc of mountains which stretches for about 2,000 kilometers from the west coast of Myanmar north to the Himalayas, then east to the north border of Vietnam. From this arc two other long spines descend south, one between Myanmar and Thailand reaching from the Himalayas almost to the equator, the other along the western border between Laos and Vietnam. The highlands which compose this massif are almost completely covered with jungle; few peaks reach the altitude at which trees cannot grow. This massif constitutes perhaps 25 per cent of all the land area of mainland Southeast Asia.<sup>68</sup>

Highlands are generally healthier than lowlands. *Anopheles* mosquitos do not survive above 600 meters elevation, nor in rice fields; malaria is most common in coastal swamps and foothills. Residents of highlands have access to fertile land replenished by volcanoes (although those on the mainland have long been extinct, their craters are still visible), and plentiful water wrung from the clouds which the monsoon winds drive over them. The mountains provide useful metals such as copper and iron, and rare commodities such as gold and products of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, from ivory to herbs. Despite these riches, the residents of the massif have always been divided into many small cultural units. In recent times they have been vulnerable to oppression and enslavement by lowlanders. There is no reason to believe that this asymmetrical relationship existed in the Classic period. The highlands probably dealt with the lowlanders on much more equal terms. It was they who knew where valuable products could be found, and how to get them.

The boundary between inhabitants of the massif and the lowlands has been anything but rigid. Renegades and defectors from the lowlands to the uplands have been quite common in recent times, and it seems probable that the flow of people between the massif and the river valleys has been constant for the past 2,000 years or more. Residents of the massif, however, are almost completely without history compared with the societies of the lowlands.<sup>69</sup>

The French historian Fernand Braudel, whose name is intimately connected with the development of the Annales school of history, pointed out that large-scale lowland sociopolitical systems have great difficulty climbing hills, let alone mountains. His observation was based on European history, but it



applies equally well to Southeast Asia. For example, Vietnamese culture rarely managed to climb above 100 meters, and almost never above 200.<sup>70</sup> This generalization does *not* seem as applicable to Sumatra, or to Mesoamerica as it is to mainland Southeast Asia. Mayan inhabitants of Mexico and Guatemala developed exchange relations with lowlanders from the same ethnolinguistic group whereby lowlands provided various kinds of luxury items such as incense and birds' feathers for religious and political displays to denizens of the uplands in exchange for basic necessities such as stone for making metates.<sup>71</sup>

This theory of Mayan evolution resembles Wheatley's theory of Southeast Asian urbanization in that it identifies ceremonial centers in areas of low economic potential as foci of economic redistribution. The climate and topography of lowland Yucatan and Guatemala are quite similar to that of lowland Seasia. In both cases, ceremonial centers developed where agricultural productivity was low, raw materials such as metals and stone were non-existent, floods were regular, and population was sparse. These ceremonial centers, such as Tikal, were however able to extract valuable raw materials from the highlands by fostering cults to which highlanders were drawn by religious devotion. One envisions similar relations between the people of the Southeast Asian massif and the cult centers of Buddhism and Hinduism. The importance of the highlands to the maritime kingdom of Srivijaya is well understood (see "Srivijaya: At the crossroads of the world", Chapter 5).

Little archaeological research has been undertaken in the Southeast Asian massif. The uplands have few roads, posing logistical problems for researchers. Early documents are extremely sparse in the uplands (although again this does not apply to Sumatra or Java). Some scholars have begun to investigate the probability that upland groups during the Classic period had frequent peaceful contact with lowlanders in the context of trade; forcible extraction by coercion was probably uncommon until recently. Archaeologists from Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos have begun to explore ancient routes over the mountains of the Annamite Cordillera between Wat Phu in Laos and My Son in Vietnam.<sup>72</sup> One major route ran between the south end of Laos from Pakse up the Attapue River, across the Boloven Plateau to the Kuntum Plateau on the east side of the watershed in what is now Vietnam and was in former times Champa. This route connected important Early Classic sites of the Cham and the Khmer via territory today inhabited by Katuic and Bahnaric subfamilies of Mon-Khmer. Their role in the transmontane communication has only begun to be investigated. Other routes connected Savannakhet with Vietnam via the Lao Ba Pass and Pakxanh with the Kiou Mugia and Keo Neua Passes.<sup>73</sup>

Three ancient trade routes connected Yunnan with the Chao Phraya where Bangkok is located today. One led through the Three Pagodas Pass, up the Ayeyarwadi to the Mandalay region, then to Kunming. Archaeologists have also begun to investigate the history of communication between the Chao Phraya and Thanlwin (Salween) basins via the Three Pagodas Pass.<sup>74</sup> A second route, which is now reviving rapidly, ran up the Chao Phraya to Kengtung, then to Kunming. A third major north-south route also began around Bangkok, crossed the Khorat Plateau to Vientiane, over the Annamite Cordillera to Hanoi, then up the Red River. These routes between kingdoms on both sides of the Himalayas should prove very fruitful subjects for future investigation.

These innovative archaeological research projects should alter the perception of the peoples of the massif as recluses who have shunned the outside world. In the past the highlanders had much more bargaining power than they do in the modern period. Future research has the potential to illuminate the

different types of relations which probably existed in the past and the reasons for the drastic loss of autonomy by the uplanders in recent centuries, which elicited an inevitable reaction against the outside world.<sup>75</sup>

### **The Shan Plateau**

The northernmost point in Seasia lies in the Himalayas, 3,000 kilometers from the equator. Remains of Pleistocene glacial activity extend south to latitude 27°, in northern Myanmar, where permanent snow still survives. The largest highland area in the massif is the Shan Plateau, at an average of 900 meters above sea level. It runs 1,000 kilometers from north to south, and between 50 and 350 kilometers east to west. On the northeast it merges with the Yunnan Plateau. The distribution of ethnic groups is similarly continuous. Members of the group known as Akha, who speak a Tibeto-Burman language, can be found in Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam, although 80 per cent of them (roughly 1.5 million people) live on the Chinese side of the border in Yunnan.<sup>76</sup> Thus the Shan-China divide is better termed a frontier than a border.

Despite being termed a plateau, it is carved up by many ridges running north-south. The Thanlwin (Salween) River, one of Southeast Asia's largest, runs through a huge gorge created by this formation. Because of the narrowness of its basin, it has been called "the least useful major river in Burma".<sup>77</sup> The river creates a barrier rather than a vehicle for communication. More than half the river's watershed lies in China. The plateau is an extension of the Sunda Shelf, which has been pushed up during the long slow collision between the Sunda Plate and the Himalayas. Many rocks on the Shan Plateau are limestones and sandstones which formed under the ocean. Caves in the limestone areas were exploited by humans in prehistory. The outlet from Inle Lake in the western Shan Highlands, 900 meters above sea level, disappears into the limestone and flows underground through an unknown course which probably leads to the Thanlwin.

The Shan Plateau is covered by a mixture of savannah and forest. The savannahs are probably the result of long-term shifting cultivation. The Shan area also yields silver, while gold is found near Myitkyina. Southernmost Myanmar, on the northwest coast of the Siam-Malay Peninsula, has been a major source of tin, probably from the Classic period or even earlier.

### **The Cardamom Mountains**

The Cardamom Mountains in southwest Cambodia near the border with Thailand and the South China Sea constitute the only sizeable highland area in the country, with Cambodia's highest point, Phnom Aural, 1,771 meters high. This range is a geological outlier disconnected from the northern massif. In 2000 the Kingdom of Cambodia established a conservation program covering 402,000 hectares of the mountain forest, which at that time still harbored a population of about 40 tigers. These mountains effectively block access to the sea from the central plain. There is no evidence that any seaports existed on

Cambodia's coast during the Classic period, although the small port of Koh Kong may have been used in the Postclassic. The Cardamom Mountains yielded the spice for which they are named, and other forest products. The southeastern extension of the Cardamoms, called the Elephant Range, provided ivory. The contemporary population speaks an old dialect of Khmer. Roleak Kang Chung, the name of a village at the eastern foot of the mountains, means "breaking the chains". The mountains appear to have been a refuge for people as well as wild animals for centuries.

A group of at least 12 burial sites sheltered by rock overhangs at an elevation of about 600 meters was discovered in the Cardamoms by tiger trackers working with the Cardamom Conservation Authority.<sup>78</sup> The burial sites have been dated by radiocarbon and stable isotope analysis to the period from 1395 to 1650. However, ceramics in the caves give a narrower range: they consist of Chinese and Thai (Si Satchanalai) wares from the mid-fifteenth century, as well as stoneware of an unknown type which is thought to have been made in Cambodia. Glass beads and bronze jewellery were also found in the jars, together with glass beads which were tested by energy-dispersive x-ray fluorescence and found to be of Chinese origin.

The jars contained human bones. The custom of disposing of the dead by placing their bones in rock shelters is found today in several isolated areas of Southeast Asia, mainly in Indonesia (by the Toraja of Sulawesi) and the Philippines (by the Sagada of Luzon). It was also practiced in Borneo in the first millennium CE, in metal-age Taiwan and the Philippines,<sup>79</sup> and in sites of the Sahuynh culture in southern Vietnam between 500 BCE and 100 CE. Other instances include the Plain of Jars in northeast Laos.<sup>80</sup> In neighbouring regions of China, the custom was once practiced by the Bo people who inhabited the Yibin region of southern Sichuan in the fourth and fifteenth centuries, based on ceramics used for the burials, as well as in Hubei, northern Shanxi, and Fujian.

The brief appearance of jar burial in the Cardamom Mountains is inexplicable. The people who created these burials almost certainly did not live in the mountains. They obviously had access to both Chinese and Thai ceramics and beads. These items may have come from the sea by way of Koh Kong, or overland. The fact that this custom could appear without obvious antecedents or successors suggests that burial customs in Southeast Asia were quite fluid rather than as rigid and conservative as many people assume.

### Central highlands of Vietnam

The central highlands subregion covers six provinces in south Vietnam. Like the Cardamoms, it has served as a refuge area for the past 500 years. Its current population includes Malayo-Polynesian and Mon-Khmer speakers. It consists of a series of connected plateaus averaging 500 to 600 meters above sea level. It is sparsely populated, which enables endangered animals such as tiger, gaur, wild water buffalo, banteng, and elephant to remain alive in the wild. The subregion's role in history has been that of a source of exotic materials, with populations of foragers who formed obscure but significant links in early long-distance trade networks.

## SUBREGIONS OF THE EQUATORIAL REGION AND THE EASTERN ISLES

## Type 3: Siamo-Malay peninsula and the Seasian archipelago

*The isthmian region: From the Isthmus of Kra to the fringe of the equatorial zone*

The Siamo-Malay Peninsula is 1,500 kilometers long, and narrowest (50 km wide) at the Isthmus of Kra, 10° north latitude. The section of the peninsula from the Isthmus of Kra to approximately 6° north latitude is crowded with remains of early cosmopolitan trading sites. Several trans-peninsular routes connected the Bay of Bengal with the South China Sea by the second century BCE, and probably 200 years earlier (Figure 2.4).

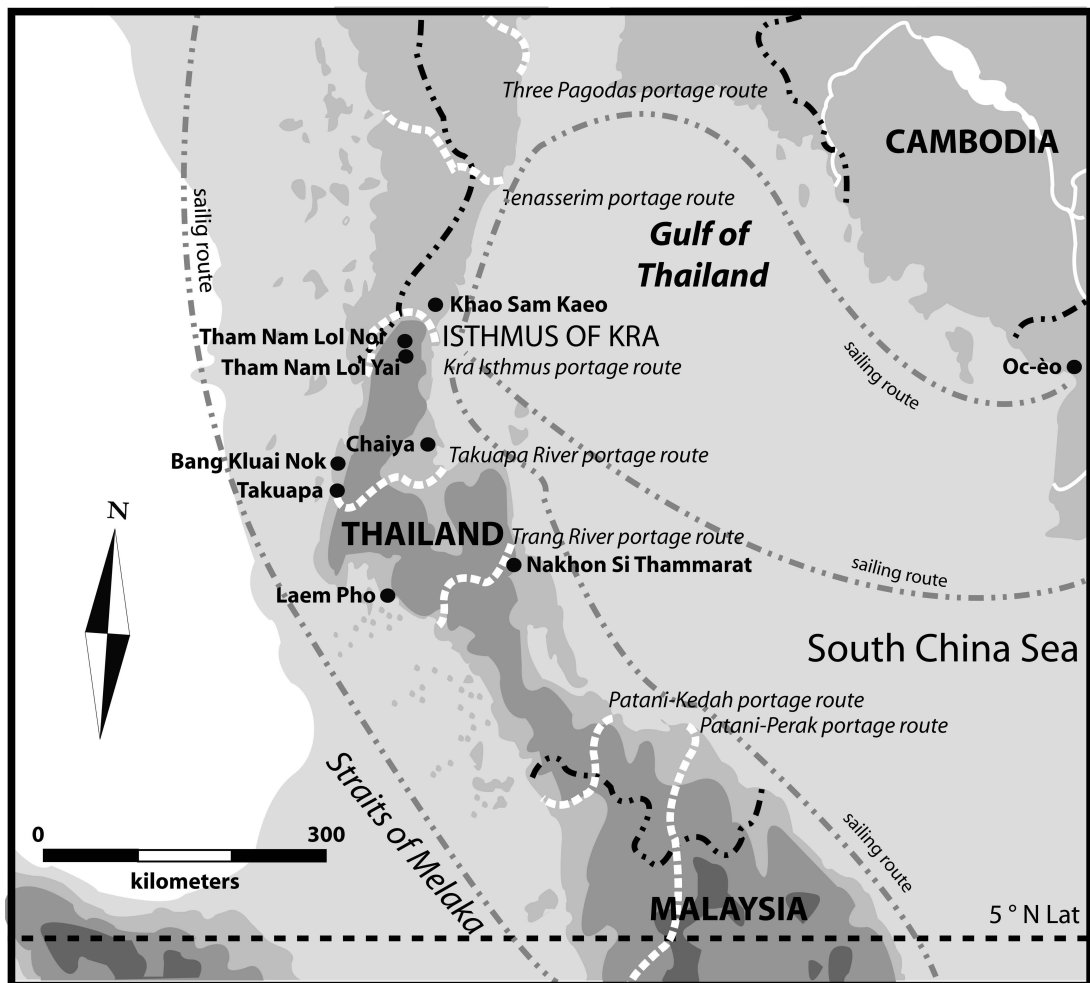


Figure 2.4 Isthmus of Kra

Latitude 6° north coincides with the transition from tropical to equatorial climates. This border is sharply demarcated by climate and vegetation; it also coincides closely with the modern political border between Thailand and Malaysia. The linguistic boundary is fuzzier; Malay is widely spoken in the four provinces of Thailand north of this line. The isthmian subregion was affiliated with the Sailendra dynasty which ruled central Java in the late eighth and early ninth centuries, and in South Sumatra in the mid-ninth century. Mon and Khmer languages were spoken in the region during the Classic and Postclassic periods.

Numerous port polities formed in the isthmian region. In the Protoclassic period we know some of these only by Chinese references to Dandan, Dunsun, and Panpan. Another is listed in the corpus of geographical information collected by a Greek living in Alexandria, Egypt, Klaudios Ptolemaios, around 100 CE: Takola *emporion*. A thousand years later this port was included in the list of territories conquered by the Chola Empire. An Indian source, the *Mahaniddesa*, written in the second or third century CE, mentions Tamali, which is probably Tambralinga.<sup>81</sup> No archaeological sites can yet be correlated with any of these names except Tambralinga, which since the late twelfth century has been called Nakhon Si Thammarat in Tai (*Nagara Sri Dharmaraja*, “capital of the Righteous King” in Sanskrit).

Tambralinga has been described as “a beach ridge society”.<sup>82</sup> Coastal change and wave action have combined to create ridges parallel to the east coast, which provide the highest, driest ground available. Similar geomorphological formations are found in peninsular Malaysia, east Sumatra, south Vietnam, and north Java.<sup>83</sup> Most remnants of Classic period culture are found on these ridges. They afford good locations for building and transport, while the lower ground between them is suitable for agriculture and fish ponds. The soil of the region is sandy, and rainfall is seasonal. There are no long rivers, and the water flow in the dry season is so low that irrigation is not a feasible means of supplementing rainfall. The area from Phuket to Kedah on the west coast was important because of rich deposits of alluvial tin.

Linguistically and artistically the isthmian region has exhibited the diversity which one would expect from a peninsula lying between the two largest centers of population and trade in Asia. Languages of the Mon and Malay families were probably spoken here at the beginning of the Classic period. Khmer was also spoken, possibly by the Protoclassic or Early Classic, and continued to be used until the seventeenth century.<sup>84</sup> Statuary and architecture of this period include works related to both mainland and insular Southeast Asia.

A range of mountains extends from the center of the isthmus to the tip of the peninsula. These mountains are inhabited by two major groups with special subsistence patterns and ethnic identities. One main group, denoted Semang, are nomadic foragers; the other, Senoi, are shifting cultivators. The Semang speak 20 Austroasiatic (Mon-Khmer) languages; the Senoi speak a Malayic language. The relationship between the Semang, Senoi, and Malay identities is extremely complex. A very simplified expedient is to characterize these three identities as the result of a long period of gradual differentiation of a single population through the formation of complementary adaptations. Modern groups referred to by these labels have their own names for smaller groups which are most relevant to their daily lives. The Semang mainly live in what is now southern Thailand, the Senoi mostly on the Malaysian side of the border. In official Malaysian terminology, Semang and Senoi are both referred to as *Orang Asli*, “original people”. This complex relationship has had a major influence on the dynamics of cultural

evolution in the isthmus during the past 4,000 years.<sup>85</sup> The same dynamic also operated in isthmian areas where Malay identity has been predominant, at least in the coastal zone, since the Protoclassic period, and probably earlier.

### ***Peninsular Malaysia***

The lowlands of the Siam-Malay peninsula from about 7° north latitude to the equator form an archaeological subregion. There are important subdivisions within this area; the current political and cultural unity which characterizes this region is probably a relatively recent phenomenon. Nevertheless, certain types of archaeological remains, mainly pottery styles which appeared 2,000 years ago, exhibit a high degree of uniformity in this area and beyond, to the east coast of Sumatra and western Borneo; a historian has denominated this area the “Sea of Malayu”.<sup>86</sup>

Early ports on peninsular Malaysia’s west coast were located in mangroves and swamp forests. The main mangrove areas are the Bujang/Muda area of south Kedah, site of one of the most important sea-ports linking Southeast Asia with India from the Protoclassic to Late Classic periods; Kuala Selinsing, Perak; Cape Rachado, near Melaka, which was the largest port in Southeast Asia in 1509; south Johor; and northwest Singapore.<sup>87</sup> Mangrove swamps are sources of protein (fish, shellfish, aquatic birds, monkeys etc.) and commodities. Mangrove wood has a high caloric content and is useful for charcoal and iron-working.

The coastal plain south of Kedah Peak extending along the Merbok and Muda Rivers and into Province Wellesley is the main area of traditional rice growing in Malaysia, along with Krian, Perak. Rice is also grown in low-lying areas between beach ridges in the west central coastal plain.<sup>88</sup> Traditional rice growing seldom depended on canals; small weirs were used to raise the levels of rivers in order to divert water onto fields during rainy periods.

Peninsular Malaysia is rich in metals, particularly tin, mostly in alluvial deposits near Kinta, Perak, and in the hinterland of Kuala Lumpur, with a small amount near Bujang, Kedah. A belt of gold-bearing rocks runs along the equator from central Sumatra through the central Malay Peninsula, outcropping again in West Borneo and the southern Philippines. The names Suvarnabhumi and Suvarnadvipa (“gold land”, “golden island”) used in South Asian sources for Seasia were not figurative; they betray knowledge of the availability of this mineral in Southeast Asia.

The east coast of the peninsula has a rather different aspect from the west coast. Whereas the west coast has a regular supply of rainfall and a low-energy environment which favours the formation of swamps and mangrove forests, the east coast is exposed to the fury of winter storms which sweep in from the South China Sea. Kelantan, Terengganu, and Pahang experience significant flooding almost every November, as does Vietnam. Historical sources refer to ports and kingdoms along the east coast, but no significant archaeological remains have been discovered there.

Klaudios Ptolemaios (or his successors) recorded a significant number of ports and cities in peninsular Malaysia: Konkonagara, in the central western hinterland; Krysoanas River, probably the Muar River in the southwest; Sabara Emporion, in the vicinity of modern Singapore; the Palanda River leading to



Palanda, which corresponds quite closely to the Johor River and Kota Tinggi; Attabas, on the southeast coast; Kole Polis, around modern Kuantan; and Tharra, around Kelantan.

### ***The South China Sea***

More than 2,000 years ago the South China Sea was a cradle where Austronesian sailors learned their skills. The South China Sea covers 3.5 million square kilometers, 40 per cent larger than the Mediterranean, with which it is sometimes compared. This sea differs from the Mediterranean in several other ways in addition to size. The Mediterranean only had two entrances/exits until the Suez Canal gave it three. There are numerous ways to get in and out of the South China Sea. In the west there are the Straits of Melaka. Since the beginning of the Common Era, this has been the main route between China and India. It is one of the world's busiest waterways today.

The Sunda Strait between South Sumatra and Java also leads to the Indian Ocean, but it has several disadvantages, the main ones being its much greater distance from India, and exposure to storms in the Indian Ocean. The coasts of the Straits of Melaka offer many estuaries where ships can take shelter, and rivers which provide access to hinterland resources. There are no large rivers along Sumatra's west coast or sheltered ports. There is little evidence that the Sunda Strait was used before the seventeenth century, when the Dutch discovered a route from the southern tip of Africa to Australia, then north to the Sunda Strait; thereafter ships often sailed from Europe to Batavia (now Jakarta) via this strait until the Suez Canal was built.

In the southwest, the Bangka, Gaspar, and Karimata Straits lead to the Java Sea and its eastern extension, the Banda Sea. The latter has been extremely important in world history because of its botanical resources: the cloves and nutmeg which gave the Banda Sea islands, Maluku (the Moluccas) their common name, the Spice Islands.

In the east, the Sulu Strait between north Borneo and the southern islands of the Philippines was another route through which Malukan spices were transported. Chinese ships used this waterway in the fourteenth century; they were probably following routes previously developed by local sailors.

At the northeast corner of the South China Sea, there is a large gap between Luzon, the largest island in the northern Philippines, and Taiwan, which is interrupted by a chain of islands called the Batanes which extend like stepping stones to Taiwan.

The western part of the South China Sea, up to a line drawn from the southern tip of Vietnam and the north tip of Borneo, is part of Asia's continental shelf. This area, called the Sunda Shelf, is 35 meters below sea level at its deepest point. During the Pleistocene glaciations which ended 10,000 years ago, sea level was as much as 150 meters lower than today. It was possible to walk from the Asian mainland to Java and Borneo. Java and Sumatra formed a single mountain range along the southern and western border of a great plain drained by very large rivers which contained the combined water of rivers which drained the Siam-Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, and northwest Borneo. These huge rivers carved deep channels on the Sunda Shelf which still exist today. The huge rivers represented a significant barrier to the movement of some plants and animals, except for fish; similar species of fish found in the Musi



and the Kapuas suggest that the rivers of Sumatra and Borneo were once connected.<sup>89</sup> The mountains of Java and Sumatra formed a pathway along which mountain flora and fauna could spread. Some plants on the upper slopes of mountains in Sundaland, including wild rice, are also found in the Himalayas (see Figure 2.1).

The surface of the South China Sea is broken by numerous mounds, many of which reach the surface of the sea, creating numerous shoals and small islands which present serious hazards to navigation. As a result, ancient sailors had to avoid large parts of the sea. Knowledge of the safest routes in the South China Sea was an important prerequisite for navigators. Probably this vast sunken plain was an important habitat for humans during the Pleistocene Era, but archaeological research there is not feasible with current technology. Several authors have speculated that this region played a significant role in human evolution, but there will be no way of proving these theories until underwater archaeology at these depths becomes possible.

When the glaciers began to melt, sea level rose to its present level, which it reached approximately 6,000 years ago. This rise in sea level drowned upper portions of river valleys carved when the sea level was 100 meters lower than today, creating many estuaries which form important human habitats. After sea level stabilized, coastlines were further inland than they are today. Erosion of the uplands and deposition at shallow river mouths then caused the sea to retreat again. Knowledge about the locations of coastlines between 1,000 and 2,000 years ago is vital to an understanding of the locations of early ports. Speculation about this subject has been particularly rife in southeast Sumatra, where some of Southeast Asia's earliest ports and kingdoms were located. In the early twentieth century, several scholars thought that the mouth of the Musi River had been located near modern Palembang in the seventh century, when Srivijaya and Jambi were founded. Such a theory would also make Bennet Bronson's upstream-downstream theory more tenable than it is.<sup>90</sup>

In the twentieth century, Southeast Asian rivers carried huge loads of sediment. The Ayeyarwadi, for instance, at the head of its delta carries 261 million tons of silt per year;<sup>91</sup> the Solo River in Java is less than half as long as the Rhine, but carries 60 times as much sediment. Put another way, the Ayeyarwadi carries 750 grams of silt per cubic meter compared with 50 grams per cubic meter for the Rhine. This figure, however, cannot be projected back into the past; the rate must have increased exponentially in recent times because of land clearing and erosion.

Geomorphological and archaeological data show that the east coast of Sumatra reached its current extent approximately 2,000 years ago.<sup>92</sup> There has, of course, been considerable deposition in certain areas of the lower Musi and Batanghari, and probably the Chao Phraya and Ayeyarwadi. Rather than open ocean 2,000 years ago, one should picture these deltas as marshy land consisting of beach ridges, levees, and hummocks of slightly higher ground colonized by mangroves and other vegetation, separated by shallow brackish waterways which have gradually been constricted or completely filled in. Palembang 2,000 years ago was already almost 90 kilometers from the open sea. The Musi downstream from Palembang would have been a cross between a tidal river and a long, narrow estuary. There would not have been enough solid ground to build houses (except on stilts) or plant crops (except for plants such as sago palms), fresh water would have been scarce, and only certain channels would have been passable for ships.

It has also been suggested that the lower central floodplain of the Chao Phraya River was covered by the ocean in 700 CE, but geomorphological research has shown that the shoreline was located around Bangkok by that time.<sup>93</sup> The area between Bangkok and the modern coastline during the Early Classic was probably not open sea, but brackish swamp with numerous mounds with mangroves and other vegetation.

### ***Mangrove fringes and sea nomads***

The swamps on both sides of the Straits of Melaka, the coasts of Borneo, many parts of the Philippines, and the mouths of the great rivers of the mainland are not attractive to modern humans, but two millennia ago humans exploited them for a wide range of resources. A particular form of adaptation evolved in the brackish swamps of the equatorial region, including the Isthmus of Kra, the Siam-Malay Peninsula, east Sumatra, the Riau Archipelago, Borneo, and the Philippines. This adaptation does not seem to have emerged along the coasts of the mainland or the islands of Java and eastern Indonesia – in other words in the tropical zones with dry seasons. There is probably some ecological reason for this correlation.

This adaptation persisted for a long time and still exists in a few areas. The Malay term *orang laut*, “sea people”, is often used to refer to groups who follow this way of life. They mainly live on boats and pursue a semi-nomadic pattern of movement, though individual groups have specific ranges within which they move. Their movements are seasonal: they remain in the lee of islands for protection from storms, and have to move when the monsoons change. The resources on which they depend for existence are also found in different areas at different times of year.<sup>94</sup>

Why such an adaptation did not appear in the tropical zones is difficult to explain. The people who led this lifestyle spoke Austronesian languages, and this adaptation may well have been close to that of the original groups which spread to areas where languages belonging to this family are currently spoken. It is likely that the original Austronesian-speaking inhabitants of Southeast Asia had a more general adaptation involving both hunting and gathering in the aquatic zones, and some form of horticulture. As specific groups evolved specialized adaptations to particular habitats, it is likely that hunter-gatherers became more efficient in gathering aquatic resources, including protein and rarities such as pearls and tortoise shell, whereas horticulturists became more efficient in producing carbohydrates, fruit, and vegetables. A symbiotic relationship probably developed which enabled both adaptations to become increasingly specialized. This adaptation may have formed during the 4,000-year-long period of rising sea level; the evidence for this is unfortunately on the bed of the South China Sea.

Southeast Asians adapted to settled life in estuarine and deltaic environments at an early stage, but because of the nature of this adaptation, archaeological remains of it are difficult to find. People lived on houseboats, rafts, and houses built on stilts over water; when the dwellings decay, they sink into the river. Societies still live over water in Sumatra, the Siam-Malay Peninsula, the Tonle Sap, and Phitsnulok on the Nan River (the only place in Thailand where houseboats are still legal). Some of the oldest traces of this way of life were discovered in the Protohistoric site of Oc-èò.

This adaptation has been very stable. The description of Palembang, Sumatra, by a seventh-century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, is very similar to another written in the nineteenth century. In the early 1800s

the only buildings of permanent material were the palace, a place of worship (a mosque), and tombs of the sultan's family. All markets took place on boats at junctions of water courses. The town itself was called "town of the twenty islands", indicating hummocks of slightly higher ground. The palaces of the sultan and two princes consisted of numerous buildings on an island. The sultan also had a garden and rural estate. Chinese and other foreigners lived on water. The settled area stretched for several kilometers along the river bank. Between Palembang and the next village upstream was a distance of six hours' fast rowing in 1818. There was no urban-rural distinction between the architecture of the capital and smaller settlements. Most of the inhabitants were fishermen, but they also owned some dry land which they used for gardens.

The river was the center of life: a source of food, a transportation network, and a foundation for homes. There were 17 natural channels on one side of the river, 42 on the other, some connected to one another by canals.<sup>95</sup> The same pattern of life probably typified many ports of the Classic period in Southeast Asia. Few lifestyles are less propitious for the recovery of archaeological data.

### ***Islands west of the Wallace Line***

The insular realm of Southeast Asia consists of 30,000 islands spread over an area measuring 4,000 kilometers east-west and 3,300 kilometers north-south. The combination of island biogeography and equatorial climate creates ideal conditions for species diversification. Ecological diversity is highly correlated with human cultural diversity. Human groups who moved into the equatorial islands had to develop specialized ways of exploiting all the different niches which nature afforded them. This situation led on one hand to the evolution of many specialized adaptations which enabled groups of people to gather enough sustenance efficiently. Groups needed intensive local knowledge to survive. The more efficient they became in exploiting a particular local area, the less stress they experienced. On the other hand, they also became less adaptable to changes in their environment and less able to move elsewhere. By the beginning of the Common Era, and probably centuries earlier, the inhabitants of the islands had begun to develop social structures which enabled them to avoid the risks caused by destabilizing short-term shortages of local food and other materials by forming exchange relationships with neighbouring groups. Complex networks of interdependency evolved.

The Southeast Asian archipelago can be divided into three zones: Sundaland, Wallacea, and Sahul. The flora and fauna of Sundaland is closely related to mainland Asia, including elephants and tigers. Sahul has a very different set of flora and fauna, including marsupials and large, flightless birds. Wallacea is the intermediate zone where the two sets of flora and fauna overlap.

Archaeological remains of Classic Southeast Asian culture are largely confined to Sunda, with a few sites in western Wallacea. Within Sunda, most evidence of Classic culture is found in the southwestern region, on the islands of Sumatra, Java, Bali, and western Kalimantan (also known as Borneo). By the Late Classic, imported artifacts reached Sahul, probably along the same routes which brought Dongson items there in the late prehistoric or Protohistoric eras.

When discussing the dynamics of the Classic cultures of insular Seasia, it is good to bear in mind the maxim, “the seas unite, the land divides”. Seasian waters can be divided into units which are as important as bodies of land. Kingdoms of the sea were known in premodern Europe: the Baltic Sea kingdom of Denmark, the Hanseatic League, and Canute’s North Sea Empire. The mid-fourteenth century Venetian empire “consisted of a series of strategic points, calling stations, merchant quarters in cities, small pieces of hinterlands, and many islands – all strung along the greatest of medieval trade-routes”,<sup>96</sup> united by commerce rather than military force. Maritime trade links in these units functioned independently of political control. “There was a time when the basins of London and Paris had more in common with one another than London had with Yorkshire or Paris with Provence.”<sup>97</sup>

Venice’s grip on trade with the Indian Ocean and Seasia through the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt inspired the Portuguese to find a route around the southern tip of Africa, to the Spice Islands of Indonesia. Once this was achieved, Venice’s heyday was over. The decline of the medieval European sea-state, according to Darby, was the result of two factors: the development of new sea routes coupled with the concept of *mare liberum* (formulated as the result of a battle between the Portuguese and Dutch near Singapore in 1605), and the improvement of overland routes which enabled the hinterland states to consolidate political power and eventually to dominate the coastal trading ports.

The concept of sea-state is applicable to socioeconomic entities or subregions in insular Seasia. A particular type of subregional identity formed, which historians have tried for almost a century to force into the mould of land-based kingdoms or “states”, but these attempts have failed. A different model for the centripetal forces which held scattered “strategic points, calling stations, merchant quarters in cities, small pieces of hinterlands, and many islands” together in a kind of interaction sphere has to be found. The outlines of such a model are sketched in this book.

## Sumatra

The island of Sumatra is approximately 2,400 kilometers long and 400 kilometers wide at its widest point (Figure 2.5). It covers 473,600 square kilometers, about the size of Sweden. The west coast of the island lies along one of the most active fault lines in the world. Tectonic activity has created a long chain of mountains, the Barisan Range, 1,800 kilometers long. Numerous peaks reach elevations between 3,000 and 4,000 meters. Volcanic activity, earthquakes, and tsunamis are frequent occurrences there. Lake Toba, in the northern region, is one of the largest volcanic crater lakes in the world. Its creation by a huge eruption around 30,000 BP would have been an epochal event with long-term effect on world climate. A pass in a region called Padang Lawas has been an important route connecting the east and west coasts since Classic times.

Approximately half of Sumatra consists of lowland forest less than 30 meters above sea level, including mangroves and peat swamp. This area has been sparsely populated throughout history, but specialized societies who exploited this environment (the Orang Laut) played key roles in Classic culture, as seafarers, warriors, and craftsmen.

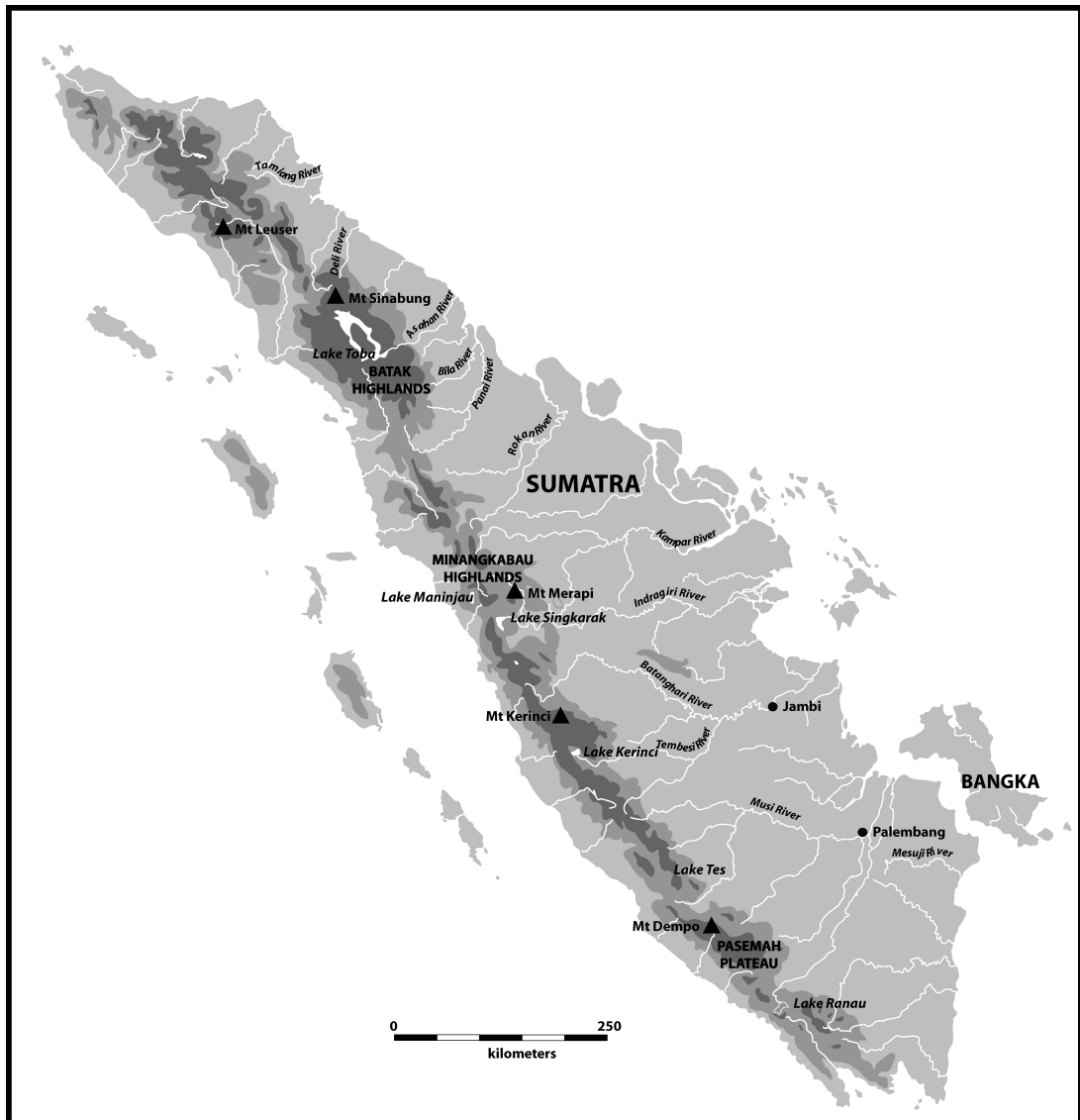


Figure 2.5 Sumatran topography

### ***North coast Sumatra (Barus, Aceh, Kota Cina)***

The three coasts of north Sumatra (northwest, north, northeast) lie at the northern entrance to the Straits of Melaka, and had much closer connections with India and West Asia than with China. Each coast has different climatic conditions. The east coast of north Sumatra is similar to the rest of the Straits of Melaka: rain at all seasons, mangrove swamps, and tidal rivers. The Deli River, though

short, served as a significant transport route in premodern times. Conversely, much larger rivers farther south, including the Rokan, Kampar, Indragiri, and Panai, were not significant nodes of civilization. Tidal bores or sand bars at their mouths disqualify them from this role. The Deli instead forms a group with other small rivers around the north tip of Sumatra and down the west coast to Barus, an extensive subregion in which a significant number of early ports evolved. Their emergence was due to their proximity to highland commodities and navigation routes into the Indian Ocean rather than to agrarian potential.

The western coastal plain is only about 50 kilometers wide, and affords no natural harbors to shelter ships from storms blowing in from the Indian Ocean. Only one important center of Classic culture existed on the west coast: Barus. This port owed its importance to camphor, a product of the local highland forests which was in high demand in the ancient world. Barus is important because it has yielded the clearest evidence of an enclave where foreign merchants established colonies in ancient Seasia.

The northern coast of Sumatra is far enough north to have pronounced wet and dry seasons. It is also unique in that it is subsiding at an extremely rapid rate because of tectonic activity. Numerous ports mentioned in Indian, Arab, and Persian sources are believed to have sunk beneath the ocean. The north coast is significant for several reasons, including the first documented conversion of a Seasian ruler to Islam in the thirteenth century.

### ***Southeast Sumatra***

Two major centers of Classic culture arose in the east Sumatran lowlands, 90 to 100 kilometers upstream from the Straits of Melaka, where peat swamps give way to some permanently dry ground. The rivers at this point are still tidal. One subregional center was established at Palembang on the Musi River, the other at Jambi on the Batanghari. To answer Wolters' question posed earlier, the Batanghari and the Musi appear superficially similar, but certain factors ensured that the Musi would prevail over the Batanghari. Soil in these lowlands is infertile, but a special form of agriculture based on seasonal flooding evolved in the middle Musi basin, providing one reason why a major center evolved there in the Early Classic. The Musi is the largest river in Sumatra, 750 kilometers long, drains 60,000 square kilometers, and has numerous tributaries in the foothill zone, where shifting cultivation has probably been conducted for millennia. Volcanoes in the Musi headwaters provide fertile soil, especially around Mount Dempo and the Pasemah Plateau. Dutch explorers in the highlands in the nineteenth century found abundant evidence of early gold mining, suggesting that this activity was practiced in the Classic period. The Batanghari have less fertile soil and a less connective river network, though it is almost as long (600 km) and covers 40,000 square kilometers. The Kampar is third (31,000 km<sup>2</sup>), followed by the Siak (16,350 km<sup>2</sup>) and Rokan (16,500 km<sup>2</sup>).<sup>98</sup>

Bangka Island off Sumatra's east coast has also yielded traces of Classic culture. This island is strategically located off the mouth of the Musi River and also has large deposits of tin. It is not known when these deposits were first exploited. Bangka's early prominence could have been based on its population's maritime activities, but it seems more probable that tin was exploited from an early time.



**Figure 2.6** Java, Bali, Flores

### ***North coastal Java: The pesisir***

Although Indonesia's two largest cities, Jakarta and Surabaya, are seaports with numerous Preclassic and Protoclassic sites in their environs, no major Classic seaports along north Java's coast have yet been identified archaeologically. This is no doubt due in large part to the tendency of seaports to be relatively unconcerned with building large monuments, preferring instead to concentrate resources on building ships and developing infrastructure such as wharves and storehouses of perishable materials near shifting river mouths. The remnants of such ports are mainly composed of poorly preserved wooden structures buried in mud, fragments of broken and discarded cargo, and remnants of small workshops. These have not attracted significant attention from archaeologists, and many such sites have probably been destroyed by similar developments in modern times.

A number of Preclassic and Protoclassic sites have been found in northwest Java. One of Java's earliest known kingdoms, Taruma, was mainly based in the hinterland around Bogor, but did leave one inscription in the Jakarta area which indicates its presence there too. About 50 kilometers east of Jakarta, recent research has revealed a very important group of sites with Buddhist brick structures and Hindu statuary, also from the Protoclassic era. The same area remained significant through the Middle and Late Classic, and in the Postclassic Banten Lama became one of Southeast Asia's first large Islamic seaports.

The north coast of Java is formed by a nearly continuous plain which stretches for 800 kilometers from west to east and 20 to 30 kilometers inland. There are two major rivers in this coastal plain, both of which flow into the sea at the northeast end of the island near Surabaya: the Solo and Brantas. The north coastal plain is known in Javanese as the *pesisir*, and it has strong cultural associations with cultural diversity and the sea, through many small fishing villages and ports which foreigners began to visit 2,000 years ago. The *pedalaman*, the interior, has a very different set of cultural associations: refined court culture, rice cultivation, and a strong Javanese identity. No records of foreign visits to the *pedalaman* exist until the 1600s. There was thus a major dichotomy between the *pesisir* and *pedalaman*, but *pedalaman* kingdoms incorporated the *pesisir* into their economies, both to acquire basic necessities such as fish, salt, and foreign luxuries.



## North Bali

Bali forms the southeastern edge of the Sunda Shelf. It is separated from the next island to the east, Lombok, by a deep channel. Like Java, the central portion of the island is occupied by a chain of volcanoes. The north-central tip of the island is an important subregion. The oldest well-excavated port in Indonesia is found at Sembiran, which dates from the very end of the Preclassic and early Protoclassic. It is probable that Bali was a stepping-stone to the Spice Islands (Moluccas/Maluku) by 2,000 years ago, thus at the very beginning of the Protoclassic period. This sector of the north coast of Bali continued to be an important link with the maritime trade routes for the next 2,000 years; it was conquered by the Dutch in the nineteenth century, several decades before they incorporated the rest of the island into their empire. The area south of the central volcanic massif is a second important subregion. Whereas the north coast is analogous to the Javanese *pesisir*, the south central area corresponds to the Javanese *pedalaman*: a region of temples, inscriptions, and highly stratified kingdoms.

## Kalimantan (Borneo)

Kalimantan is the third largest island in the world, covering 743,600 square kilometers, of which 427,500 square kilometers was, until recently, lowland rainforest. Its population in 2009 was 18.59 million, compared with 141 million in Java and 50 million in Sumatra (which covers only 480,481 square kilometers). The biogeography of this enormous landmass is complicated, and Classic period sites are few. There are four subregions where early historic sites have been reported (Figure 2.7).

The northwest corner of Kalimantan, which is now divided between Indonesia and Malaysia, is one of the three most densely populated areas of the island. The Sambas region includes a larger river, the Kapuas, which provides access to the resources of the hinterland, including gold deposits. Iron was also worked in the Kucing River basin during the Middle Classic.<sup>99</sup> This region probably formed part of the Srivijaya mandala (see “Sulawesi and Borneo during the Early Classic”, Chapter 5).

More anomalous is the region of Kutai on the east coast, where the largest rivers are the Kayan and Mahakam. In this subregion, seven inscriptions of the *yupa* type dating from the Protoclassic period have been discovered; they are the oldest in Indonesia (see “Kalimantan (Borneo)” under “The Protoclassic in the eastern archipelago”, Chapter 3). This subregion continued to produce Classic-type artifacts for centuries thereafter, but archaeological data from this region is poor in both quality and quantity.

The province of South Kalimantan has three major rivers: the Kahayan, Kapuas, and Barito. Little archaeological research has been conducted there, but some Classic period sites have been recorded in the Banjarmasin region. Some of these are located in peat swamps around the sites of Nagara, Patih Muhur, Kandangan, and Gambut on the Barito. Looting of gold ornaments and beads in the 1980s took a severe toll on them. Old wooden posts preserved by the anaerobic environment were removed for reuse; large trees are now scarce in this area. Unusable items discarded on the surface include ceramic



**Figure 2.7** Prehistoric sites of Borneo and the Philippines

sherds, corroded iron objects, and fragments of old boats. Some of the ceramics are Chinese stonewares of the “small mouth bottle” or “mercury jar” type which were common in this area between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>100</sup>

North coastal Brunei, now a sultanate, became important in the Postclassic. Its importance was probably due to its function as a center for the collection of natural products from the hinterland, much of which was destined for China. It probably had links to Postclassic sites in the Philippines such as Santa Ana in the Manila area.

## ***Philippines***

Three subregions rose to prominence in the Philippines: Butuan and the Visayas during the Middle Classic and Manila during the Postclassic. Gold is mined in the Butuan area on the northeast coast of Mindanao, the chief island in the southern Philippines. Little excavation has been conducted at Butuan, but astounding hoards of gold jewellery found by looters are among the largest ever uncovered. Butuan was probably among the Southeast Asian kingdoms which formed formal diplomatic relations with Song dynasty China.

The oldest writing in the Philippines, on a gold sheet found at Laguna de Bai, near Manila, is dated 900 CE, the end of the Early Classic. The next substantial site in the northwest Luzon subregion is a burial ground with Chinese ceramics from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. Earthenware from this period bearing inscriptions in a local variant of Indian script has been found, which was still in use at the time of Spanish contact.

The Visayas area consists of several important islands. Negros and Cebu are the most thoroughly explored by archaeologists. Negros has yielded one of the best studies of the evolution of settlement patterns in the Southeast Asian archipelago.<sup>101</sup>

## **Type 4: Island hinterlands**

### ***Sumatra: Central Rift valleys, Pasemah, Rejang Lebong***

Besides their potential for violent eruptions, Sumatran mountains provide many benefits to humans: fertile highlands with abundant water, low rates of diseases such as malaria, numerous minerals, and flora and fauna which yielded commodities which were highly prized in ancient world commerce. Most of the island has no true dry season; rainfall averages 3,500 millimeters per year. Traditional centers of population are concentrated in these highlands. The major important Classic highland valleys which formed centers of Classic culture from south to north are Pasemah, Rejang-Lebong, Kerinci, Padang Roco, Batusangkar, and Padang Lawas. Highland-lowland relations in Sumatra were very different from mainland Southeast Asia. Until the twentieth century, the highlands were more heavily populated than the lowlands. This is still true of the agrarian population; the lowlands consist of a few large riverine ports separated from one another by long stretches of jungle, swamp, and oil palm. The mountains by contrast are densely cultivated.

### ***Java: The pedalaman, or hinterland***

The island of Java is much smaller than Sumatra (800 km long and 100 km wide at most, about the same in area as England or New York State), but seems to have supported a very dense population since the Classic period. This may be partly explained by the fact that much of Sumatra is either swamp or

mountains. Although Java's center consists of 121 volcanoes, 17 of which are active, the lowlands are in general suitable for agriculture. Intensive cultivation of rice may have begun here before the Classic period. The main areas of lowland rice growing are located along the Solo River, and around Mount Merapi, Mount Lawu, and Wilis.

Rice terraces climb to nearly 1,000 meters along the slopes of these mountains. The antiquity of these terraces is in dispute. They are considered to be as old as 2,000 years, but recent studies in the Philippines suggest that terraces there are only about 500 years old. It is, of course, necessary to conduct independent studies in Java to determine whether the same process of intensive terracing for rice cultivation occurred simultaneously in both areas. Two other extensive areas of rice growing lie in the southeastern part of the island, in the Kediri and Malang basins, both centers of kingdoms in the Middle and Late Classic periods. In 1967, root crops (taro and yams) represented more than 20 per cent of cultivated land in southeast Java.<sup>102</sup> Probably the proportion of land devoted to these traditional crops was higher during the Classic period, and that devoted to rice was correspondingly less.

Unlike Sumatra, the island is poor in metals. Java has been occupied by humans for 1.6 million years; the island thus provides the longest continuous sequence of the archaeological record of humanity. Western Java has no true dry season, but eastern Java has a seasonal climate.

The western third of the island is known as Sunda, and the people of this region speak a language called Sundanese which is different from the rest of the island. The soil in this area is not as fertile as the rest of the island because of the acid character of the volcanic ejecta here. The earliest historical center of human activity in Java dates from the Protoclassic period and lies in Sunda, mainly in the highlands, though some sites have been found along the coast. When Islam was introduced to Sunda in the sixteenth century, it was brought by people from the eastern part of the island. Some evidence of Javanese cultural influence, including art styles and pottery types, are found in Banten, but the rest of Sunda retained local traditions of pottery-making and the Sundanese language.

The next center of complex historical culture in Java arose during the Early Classic, in the south-central part of the island. Remains from this period are distributed over much of the central and eastern interior. Middle and Late Classic remains are mainly found in the interior of the eastern part of the island.

Rivers played a role in determining the locations of the Classic sites of Java, but it seems likely that much transport and communication followed overland routes. Most sites are located in the hinterland, near but not on the banks of the two main rivers of Java, the Solo and Brantas. The latter is 550 kilometers long, and its course runs in a complete circle around a cluster of volcanoes in the eastern part of the island.

The lack of known coastal sites in Java is probably due not to their absence but to the neglect of sites without monumental remains. This bias in favour of hinterland sites over lowland ports is found throughout Southeast Asia. Few surveys have been conducted in areas without monuments. It may be too late to remedy this situation now, since coastal areas have been subjected to much recent development.

No important sites are found along Java's south coast. Much of the land along that coast consists of infertile limestone, and navigation along this shore is very treacherous. The probable frequency of tsunamis on the coast is another disincentive to occupation there.

### ***South Bali***

The densest population of the island for the past 2,500 years at least has been found in the southeastern area, where an alluvial plain slopes gently from the volcanic heart of the island to the Indian Ocean. The fertile soil here is sprinkled with sites from the Preclassic through Postclassic periods. Irrigated rice terraces here are also thought to have been constructed as early as the Classic period, if not earlier. The rivers are too small and deeply incised to serve as transport links. No early ports have been found there, though an inscription at Sanur from the ninth century may hint at the existence of a link to the maritime sea lanes.

### ***Lombok***

Lombok technically forms part of Wallacea, but is only 40 kilometers east of Bali. The western half of Lombok is inhabited by Balinese, and some Late Classic sites have been found there. In recent times the west half of Lombok was ruled by Bali, and it is possible that Classic Lombok should be considered a part of the Bali subregion in historical archaeology.

### ***Sulawesi***

The island of Sulawesi, which is about the size of Great Britain, lies just east of the Sunda Shelf, and thus forms part of Wallacea. Sulawesi is actually larger in land area than Java, but its population has always been much smaller. Doubtless it was the same during the Classic period. Much of the island is mountainous except for the southwest and southeast arms.

The southwestern arm has yielded artifacts from the prehistoric period, including cave paintings dated at approximately 30,000 BP. Some megalithic-type stone carvings in the central highlands may date from the late Preclassic to Protoclassic periods. During the Early Classic period some Buddhist artifacts reached this region. Some gold and iron are found in the mountains nearby, but the area's main assets were probably its geographical location and the seafaring people who in modern times are known as Bugis and Makassarese. They were well placed to serve as a stopover on the way to the Spice Islands (Moluccas/Maluku).

The subregions of Southeast Asia developed their distinctive identities in the Preclassic and Protoclassic periods. These identities intensified in the Classic era, but they have remained remarkably stable. Some changes occurred on mainland Southeast Asia as a result of migrations from Tibet and China at the beginning of the Middle Classic era, but the newcomers absorbed much from the previous inhabitants. A synthesis of earlier cultures and new socioeconomic patterns and languages emerged in most of mainland Southeast Asia by the end of the Classic era. The major exception to this generalization is found in southern Vietnam, where Cham culture has been almost completely replaced by that of immigrants from the Red River region.

## NOTES

- 1 Dobby 1967: 62.
- 2 Dobby 1967: 61.
- 3 ASEAN, Fourth ASEAN State of the Environment Report 2009 [Accessed 26 February 2015 [www.scribd.com/doc/111872146/Fourth-ASEAN-State-of-the-Environment-Report-2009](http://www.scribd.com/doc/111872146/Fourth-ASEAN-State-of-the-Environment-Report-2009)]
- 4 Glover 1972: 159.
- 5 Glover 1972: 161, footnote 10.
- 6 Fisher 1967: 26.
- 7 Fisher 1967: 695; Whitmore 1978: 643.
- 8 Verstappen 1975: 12–13.
- 9 W.L. Dale, reproduced in Dunn 1975; Whitmore 1978: 644.
- 10 Hutterer 1976.
- 11 Harlan 1977.
- 12 Brandt 1976.
- 13 Bronson and Glover 1984: 43.
- 14 Miksic n.d.
- 15 Lynch 1973.
- 16 Gorman 1969.
- 17 Peterson and Peterson 1977: 538.
- 18 Fontanel and Chantefort 1978.
- 19 Hugo 1980: 99.
- 20 Hanson and Koesoebiono 1979: 148.
- 21 Dobby 1967: 31.
- 22 van der Hoeven 1864: 41; translation by J.N. Miksic.
- 23 Vaas, Sachlan, and Wiraatmadja 1953; MacKinnon, Gusti Hatta, Hakimah Halim, and Mangalik 1996: 148.
- 24 Milton 1984.
- 25 Peterson 1977.
- 26 Sopher 1977.
- 27 Crawford 1828: 54.
- 28 Sopher 1977: 71.
- 29 Binford 1968.
- 30 Flannery 1972.
- 31 Ellen 1979.
- 32 Rockhill 1915.
- 33 Ellen 1979: 53.
- 34 Miksic 1984.
- 35 Glover 1979: 183.
- 36 Higham 1983: 172, 180–185.
- 37 Hirth and Rockhill 1911.
- 38 Schrieke 1966: 21–22.
- 39 Roger Blench 2009.
- 40 The applicability of the label “Austronesian” to people as well as a language family has generated a great deal of debate. Important contributions to the discussion include: Bellwood 1978, 2007; Bellwood, Fox, and Tryon, eds. 1995; Meacham 1984–85, 2004; Solheim 1984–85.
- 41 Diffloth 2005.
- 42 Wolters 1982: 6–7.

- 43 Grave 1995 rejected the *mandala* concept because of the way it was used by certain scholars, preferring the term “landscape”. The *mandala* concept is not a “hypothesis” as Grave termed it, nor is it a type of “state”. Wolters disliked the term “state” (personal communication) and never used it. The term *mandala* has the advantage of having been used by Seasians themselves. We can seek to determine the parameters of the term *mandala* by reference to inscriptions and distributions of archaeological remains. The search for a means of integrating highland areas, where archaeological remains are less obvious, into the study of Classic Seasia is an important one, and this book attempts to contribute to that effort.
- 44 Wheatley 1983:426.
- 45 In a later book on the Near East, Wheatley produced a functional definition of the city which is his most explicit definition of the word: “A city comprises a set of functionally interrelated social, political, administrative, economic, cultural, religious, and other institutions located in close proximity in order to exploit scale economies. A group of such institutional sets, together with their attributes and mutual relationships, constitutes an urban system, an arrangement in which the concurrent operation of agglomerative tendencies and accessibility factors tends to induce a hierarchical arrangement of the constituent parts . . . *a unity theory capable of accommodating the generation and relative dispositions of all the constituent elements has yet to be devised.*” [Emphasis added.] Wheatley 2001: 59.
- 46 Crumley 1976.
- 47 Miksic 2000.
- 48 Benda 1962: 113.
- 49 Mekong River Commission 2010.
- 50 Dobby 1967: 271.
- 51 Dobby 1967: 263.
- 52 Dobby 1967: 269.
- 53 Nicolaas van Zalinge, Data Requirements for Fisheries Management in the Tonle Sap. Mekong River Commission. Fisheries Program [Accessed 7 May 2014. [www.fao.org/docrep/005/ad070e/ad070e0a.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/ad070e/ad070e0a.htm)].
- 54 Dobby 1967: 302.
- 55 Malleret 1963: IV, 8.
- 56 Dobby 1967: 274.
- 57 Dobby 1967: 273.
- 58 Hutangkura 2014.
- 59 Hudson 2005.
- 60 Dobby 1950/1967: 151.
- 61 Hudson 2005.
- 62 Dobby 1950/1967: 168.
- 63 Fisher 1967: 432.
- 64 Fisher 1967: 420.
- 65 Fisher 1967: 532.
- 66 The only records of this early kingdom are found in Chinese texts. The center of this kingdom may have been located near modern Hue. Around 192 the son of an official killed the local magistrate and formed a kingdom which he called Lin Yi. The origin of this name is unknown, as is the ethnicity of the inhabitants. They may have constituted a mixture of Mon-Khmer and Cham, with a gradual increase in the Cham component.
- 67 Wheatley 1983: 418, note 205, citing Eveline Porée-Maspero, *Étude sur les rites agraires des Cambodgiens*, Volume I (Paris and La Haye 1962, p. 144–149).
- 68 Scott 2009, 14, states that “Zomia”, including the massif which extends from Southeast Asia to China, India, and Bangladesh, covers 2.5 million square kilometers, about as large an area as Europe.
- 69 Fiskesjö believes that a valid distinction can be drawn between groups of massif dwellers with greater and lesser admixtures of refugees from the lowlands.



- 70 De Koninck 2005: 48.
- 71 Rathje 1972, 1974, 1975.
- 72 Tran Ky Phuong 2013.
- 73 Sisouphanthong and Taillard 2000: 150–151.
- 74 Moore and San Win 2014.
- 75 Scott 2009 has focused on the interaction between states and residents of what he terms “Zomia” in recent times. Whereas polities (“states” in his term) still have difficulty climbing above 300 meters, it seems that merchants have never experienced the same difficulty. Scott acknowledges as much (page 4): “In truth, peripheral peoples had always been firmly linked economically to the lowlands and to world trade. In some cases, they appear to have provided most of the products valued in international commerce.” He underlines the fact that “it is impossible to provide a satisfactory account of the valley states without understanding the central role played by Zomia in their formation and collapse” (page 16).
- 76 Michaud 2006: 30.
- 77 Dobby 1950/1967: 156.
- 78 Miksic et al. 2008; Beavan et al. 2012.
- 79 Junker 1999:41.
- 80 Wilder 2003.
- 81 Wheatley 1983: 237.
- 82 Noonsuk 2013: 185.
- 83 Such geomorphological features are also found in other deltas, such as that of the Mississippi River in America, where they are termed “cheniers”.
- 84 Vickery 1972: 397–410; 2003: 122–123.
- 85 Benjamin 2015.
- 86 L. Andaya 2008: 18. See Andaya 2008: 3–17 and Benjamin 2015 for thorough discussions of ethnicity in Sumatra and the Siam-Malay Peninsula over the past 2,000 years.
- 87 Dobby 1967: 101, fig. 34.
- 88 Dobby 1967: 139.
- 89 Dobby 1967: 52.
- 90 Dobby 1967: 58; Bronson 1977.
- 91 Dobby 1967: 48–49, 83.
- 92 Miksic 1977; Nurhadi 2008.
- 93 Hutangkura 2014.
- 94 Sopher 1977.
- 95 Alkemade 1883; Anonymous 1822; van Sevenhoven 1825; Salmond 1857.
- 96 Darby 1932: 146.
- 97 Darby 1932: 142.
- 98 Bezemer 1921: 528–530.
- 99 Harrison and O’Connor 1969; Christie 1985.
- 100 Sunarningsih 2007, 2013.
- 101 Junker 1999.
- 102 Dobby 1967: 229, fig. 75.

# 3

## PREHISTORY

### Two million to 2,000 years ago

Southeast Asia has the longest continuous record of human activity of any region on earth. Premodern hominids were living in Java by 1.6 million years ago. The last member of the genus *Homo* to share the planet with *Homo sapiens* lived on the island of Flores, eastern Indonesia. Fossils from Java represent all stages of the evolution of our species, from *Homo erectus* to modern humans, which are found in Africa. In addition to physical changes, transitions from hunting and gathering to farming, from nomadism to sedentariness, from the use of stone and wood to metal, from life in villages to towns and cities, can all be found in Seasia. The naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace was not far wrong when he speculated in 1869 that humans may have first walked the earth in Sumatra or Borneo, based on his research on the orangutan.

Eugene Dubois in the late nineteenth century conducted one of the first purposive surveys by a scholar in search of human origins. He was fascinated by the discovery of a premodern skull in Neanderthal, Germany, in 1856, and by Wallace's ideas, and was determined to find evidence to support them. He obtained a position as a doctor in the Netherlands Indies and at his request was posted to west Sumatra where he arrived in 1887. He explored limestone caves there in search of human fossils but found only animal bones. Then he heard rumors of an ancient skull found in east Java in 1889. Dubois transferred to east Java, and at Trinil, he found the proverbial needle in the haystack when he discovered a skullcap of a premodern human in 1891, and a femur the next year. These were the first recognized fossils of premodern humans found outside Europe. Dubois assigned them to the species *Pithecanthropus erectus* (erect ape-man).<sup>1</sup>

European society of the late nineteenth century was, however, not ready to accept the idea of human evolution from ape-like ancestors. Dubois was so intimidated by the criticism he received that he locked his fossils in a safe and refused to show them to anyone for decades, until a young palaeontologist named G.H.R. von Koenigswald broke down his reserve. By this time the quest for humanity's origins had become more respectable, but the focus of research had shifted. *Homo erectus* was found in

Zhoukoudian, northern China, in 1927, and in 1929 the skull of a species then denominated *Sinanthropus pekinensis*. Further research revealed traces of fire, bone, and stone tools, extinct animals, and even plants.

From China the focus of the search for early humans moved to east Africa. Discoveries by several palaeontologists, L.S.B. and Mary Leakey in particular, beginning in 1959 resulted in the shift of research to that continent. For most of the twentieth century Seasia's potential to yield relevant information on human evolution was almost completely ignored.

In 1936 archaeologist Ralph von Koenigswald went to Java to reinvestigate Dubois' results. He soon found the remains of an older form of *Pithecanthropus* at Sangiran. In the next few years numerous important fossils were found at Sangiran. Unfortunately, many of them were obtained from local residents who had been paid for finding fossils since the 1890s. Their original context is therefore unknown. Although it is prohibited by law, this activity continues.

Renewed interest in Java only arose in 1979 when the Indonesian palaeontologist Sartono found a very archaic skull at Sangiran with thick bones and a sagittal crest, which was given the epithet *Meganthropus* (now sometimes called *Meganthropus palaeojavanicus*). More than eight sites and over 100 specimens of *Homo erectus* have now been found in Java. *Homo erectus* (some believe that the proper designation should be *Homo sapiens erectus*, signifying that the pithecanthropines are a subspecies rather than a separate species) appeared in Java and Africa at almost the same time (approximately 1.6 to 1.7 million years ago).

Sangiran is a small river flowing through an area of limestone about 50 kilometers upstream from Trinil. It is now recognized that the Trinil fossils are more recent, probably between 1.3 million and 500,000 years old. Ngandong brains were bigger than the Trinil examples; some argue that Ngandong people were early *Homo sapiens sapiens*, but others classify them as late *Homo sapiens erectus*. In the late twentieth century new research in Java finally succeeded in laying to rest one of the most puzzling anomalies in Seasian palaeontology: the lack of any tools associated with the fossils. Research beginning in the 1980s circumvented this problem by digging farther upstream. These efforts were eventually crowned with success, and the nature of Javanese Palaeolithic technology could finally be linked to particular fossil specimens.

Previously, stone tools found in Indonesia and mainland Seasia, particularly Myanmar, but without human fossils, had been attributed to the Palaeolithic on the basis of style. This procedure was problematic, since it involved untestable assumptions regarding the role of stone tool technology in Seasia compared with that of Africa and Europe. One of the major scholars in the field of Palaeolithic studies, Hallam Movius, famously characterized Seasian Palaeolithic tools as "crude, colorless, and unenterprising".<sup>2</sup> By implication, so were the people who made them. Nevertheless, Movius was the first to realize that the Seasian Lower Palaeolithic differed significantly from India and China. He created new terms for three tool types which were only found in Seasia (chopping tools, hand adzes, and proto-hand axes), and redefined "chopper" and "scraper". Seasian methods of making and using stone tools were radically different from traditions found elsewhere.

The attitude which led Movius to attribute derogatory psychological and aesthetic characteristics to stone tools fitted well into the view which prevailed among scholars of the early twentieth century

that Seasia was a peripheral area isolated from the rest of the world, a cul-de-sac. In the mid-twentieth century, however, a contradictory line of thought began to form. A geographer named Carl Sauer advanced the hypothesis that one of the most important innovations of all time, the shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture, had begun in Seasia. Sauer (1952) in his seminal work based his contention on the grounds that bananas, coconuts, and sugar cane, which had become staples of the diets of people around the world, must have arisen from wild varieties found only in Seasia. He argued that these tree crops involved a different kind of adaptation than the domestication of grains such as wheat, corn, millet, and rice. The development of tree crops would be harder to detect, since they seldom or never left traces in the hot and humid Seasian climate, and they had no hard parts such as rice chaff to be preserved.

In the 1960s, new lines of thought parallel to that of Sauer emerged. Karl Hutterer pointed out that Seasian societies inhabited an environment with very different conditions from east Africa or Europe. In those areas, large grasslands provided ideal habitats for big game animals which lived in herds. Humans developed specialized tools to hunt these animals and process their meat, hide, sinews, and bones. There were no herds of big game in Seasia. People here needed a very different toolkit for acquiring food and raw materials.

Research on the “crude” tools of the Seasian Palaeolithic using techniques such as edge wear analysis has shown that they were not used for hunting or processing meat or hide; instead they were probably used for making other tools of perishable materials such as wood or bamboo. A two-stage process was probably involved, of which only one type of material, stone, has been preserved. Thus the role of stone in Seasian societies was probably much different than in Europe or Africa. It was not a principal focus of artistic activity or social status; in Seasia that role was probably reserved for wood.<sup>3</sup> Seasian technology thus was probably complex, requiring mastery of several different media.

Another major obstacle which prevents archaeologists from delving deeply into the Pleistocene period in Seasia is that much of what was dry land during that period is now under water. As much as 30 per cent of Seasia’s landmass was submerged between 10,000 and 6,000 years ago when sea levels rose. The affected areas, along sea coasts and rivers, would have been prime niches for humans to exploit.

Some scientists speculate that the forests of Seasia during the Pleistocene would have been less dense than today. It seems likely that the temperature in Seasia dropped by 5° to 7° C, whereas in Europe the decline was 10° to 15° C during at least 10 main cold periods (glacials). Fewer animal species became extinct in Seasia compared with Europe. If the temperature were several degrees cooler and rainfall less abundant, then the now-drowned continental shelf of Sundaland might have looked more like African savannahs than rainforests. This theory has not been tested, mainly because of the difficulty of taking samples in deep water. In a comparable part of the world, Amazonia, this theory was tested through palynological research. The results:

... suggest overwhelmingly a history of formation stability in the Amazon basin through all stages of a glacial cycle. . . . These were not formation (or biome) replacements but modest changes in relative abundance of taxa always present in the forest. The data make it unlikely that there have ever been widespread expansions of savanna onto what are now the forested lowlands.<sup>4</sup>

If Sundaland experienced the same kind of biological stability as Amazonia (and there is no reason to think otherwise), then we can assume that Pleistocene Seasia afforded many types of habitats favourable for early man. The western edge of Sundaland which remains above water now was probably less heavily populated than the now-drowned lowlands. Technological development there might have been different, but until it becomes possible to search for Palaeolithic sites under 100 meters of water, this will remain speculative.

Greater ecological diversity is correlated with longer food chains, a situation which leads to more frequent symbiosis. In humans, this is likely to yield an “intricate ethnic mosaic of groups on widely different levels of subsistence coexisting in close propinquity and often with some amount of economic interdependence”.<sup>5</sup> The presence of rainforest with its higher diversity index in much of Seasia during the Pleistocene is likely to have begun to exert its tendency to foster symbiosis between human groups at an early stage.

## THE END OF THE PALAEOOLITHIC AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT PHASE

In most of the world, the Palaeolithic is divided into three subphases. In the Lower Palaeolithic, humans were physically different from modern *Homo sapiens*. The Middle Palaeolithic began around 300,000 years ago, when the first evidence of fire appears. The first works of art may have appeared toward the end of this period. The Upper Palaeolithic began approximately 40,000 years ago, when anatomically modern humans began to appear. Their tools were more refined and displayed more stylistic as well as functional attributes. In Europe and Africa, arrowheads and spear points appeared, indicating more sophisticated hunting techniques. Stone tool industries became more varied, indicating more specialized adaptations to local habitats. Human beings moved into colder areas and began to exploit caves. They do not seem to have lived in them all the time; perhaps they only visited them while hunting or gathering in the vicinity during a period of severe cold near the end of the Ice Age. Caves generally provide much better conditions for the preservation of artifacts and bones than open sites, so much of our data from this period comes from caves, but it is a misnomer to call people of this period “cavemen”. No doubt they spent most of their time elsewhere.

The oldest works of art yet found in Seasia come from seven caves in South Sulawesi. These may in fact be the oldest paintings in the world. They have been known since the 1950s, but they were only dated in 2014 when a new method was applied to them.<sup>6</sup> This method yielded a date of at least 39,900 for the stencil of a hand. Pictures of a pig deer (*babirusa* in Indonesian) and another animal of unknown species were found to be at least 35,000 years old. The speleothems obviously formed after the paintings were created, but it is at present impossible to know how much time elapsed between the two events. The implication, however, is obvious: the people whom Movius considered “crude” were one of the first in the world to create rock art.

The age of one particular stone tool industry found in south central Java (termed “Pacitanian” after the area where it is found) has been fiercely debated. Discovered in 1935, it was originally classified as Lower Palaeolithic on the basis of its similarity to the chopper-chopping tool complex. More recent

scholars have suggested that it dates from the Upper Palaeolithic instead.<sup>7</sup> This illustrates the difficulty of trying to date Seasian stone tools on the basis of style. No doubt many different industries evolved in conjunction with the locally available types of stones and the specific uses for which they were intended.

The Palaeolithic stage of technological development came to an end with the climatic change from Pleistocene to Holocene, when the earth became warmer. This is dated to approximately 11,700 years ago. By this time people in east China and Japan had begun to make artifacts from a new kind of material: clay. It was formerly thought that the production of ceramics was a sign of the Neolithic, when people began to farm and form settled villages, but we know now that this was not the case. Some groups in East Asia adopted a sedentary lifestyle around 15,000 BP, based not on agriculture but on sophisticated exploitation of aquatic resources, including both animals such as fish and birds, and wild plants which grew in swamps. This adaptation enabled them to find enough wild food to make it unnecessary to move every few months. Some groups prefer to move rather than adopt a sedentary lifestyle; why some groups made the choice to abandon a pattern which had existed for a million years is unknown, but when they did, they began to reproduce more rapidly. A process of rapid population growth began which is still continuing.

It was formerly assumed that the transition from Palaeolithic to Neolithic constituted a sudden revolutionary change in human culture. It is now known that the change from hunting and gathering to agriculture was the result of many choices by many groups; some groups today in Seasia still prefer to rely on wild food sources and to live in small groups despite the pressure on them to conform to the settled lifestyle typical of the vast majority of humans. There is no special reason why this change took place, but we do know that it was in most cases voluntary, and that it involved a gradual adjustment in lifestyle rather than a sudden switch. There were many intermediate stages in the change; the transition can be described as a cline rather than a threshold. Even today people in urbanized societies still hunt and gather, mostly as a matter of choice or for sport rather than out of necessity.

The transition from a strategy according to which all food was obtained from wild sources to another period when domesticated sources comprised a major proportion of all caloric intake varied in its beginning, duration, and details in different parts of the world. The term "Mesolithic" was coined to denote the period between the beginning of the transition from food-gathering to food-producing and some ill-defined point at which the process was judged to have been completed. In practice there is no clear boundary between the two patterns.

The term "Mesolithic" has not been generally applied to Seasia. During most of the period during which archaeology developed, Seasia was assumed to have entered the period of agriculture (the Neolithic) rather late and quickly, so the term would not have been relevant. In the 1950s and especially the 1960s, scholars began to accept the idea that Seasians had begun to experiment with plant and animal reproduction to the point at which some species became domesticated, that is, they began to develop some characteristics which benefited humans but made it difficult for the plants and animals concerned to survive without human protection. In animals this meant smaller horns and weaker bones, but higher production of meat, wool, or milk. In plants it meant seeds which did not drop on the ground when ripe, but remained attached to the plant's stalk so that humans could more easily harvest them, larger grains, etc.

A category of stone tools termed “Hoabinhian” after a site in north Vietnam is a candidate for a form of technology which could have emerged as part of a Mesolithic-type adaptation in Seasia. Flaked tools including projectile points appeared in Seasia in the Upper Palaeolithic around 30,000 years ago (in Sabah and south Thailand).<sup>8</sup> In comparison with them, Hoabinhian tools seemed crude. It is now suspected that Hoabinhian technology was not a particular style of stone tool; computer analysis of a collection of artifacts of this type failed to reveal any evidence of consistent stylistic traits.<sup>9</sup> Instead these tools are better termed a “technocomplex”.<sup>10</sup> Their forms were determined by their functions and raw material, and did not convey any cultural information.

The standard framework for periodizing human prehistory relies heavily on technological items (tools) and their material (stone, bronze, iron). This chronology implies that technology is the main determinant of human evolution. There are many reasons to doubt this theory, and to suggest that technology is a dependent rather than independent variable. Unfortunately, technological items are by far the most common source of data available for the study of ancient human behavior. One should avoid the assumption that technology is paramount in human evolution. The long-term ideal is to study the distribution of objects in space in order to study human behavior, which can give us insights into non-material, symbolic, or mental aspects of culture. As one scholar has put it, “we need to assess the limits to the amount of blood that can realistically be squeezed from these stones”.<sup>11</sup>

More important is the difficulty in identifying the period when indigenous Seasian plants and animals became domesticated. For various reasons, including a lack of scientifically trained Seasian archaeologists, little research has been designed with the objective of recovering floral and faunal remains which would shed light on the dating of plants or animals during the transition from wild to domesticated. Another problem is that Seasians may have focused their early manipulation of plants on trees with long lifespans rather than on annual crops such as rice. Yet another consideration is that some important Seasian crops such as taro and yams are propagated vegetatively (by cloning), rather than through seeds.

One of the most innovative projects designed to study the shift to agriculture was conducted in New Guinea’s highlands. A highland swamp in New Guinea (technically just beyond the eastern boundary of Seasia) revealed no artifacts, but discovered evidence of a water management system known from western Pacific taro gardens.<sup>12</sup> This type of study has not yet been repeated, and it does not prove that taro was domesticated at this period. It does, however, suggest that water management systems can be detected through careful attention to soil forms even when no artifacts or plant materials are present, and that people in this region have been perfecting water control technology for a very long time.

A related field of research is the study of fossil pollen. Some of the best preserved pollen is found in highland swamps in Sumatra. One swamp, Pea Sim-Sim, has a pollen record 18,000 years long; another, Tao Sipinggan, is 12,000 years long. At Pea Sim-Sim, swamp forest was cleared approximately 6,500 years ago. At another site, Danau Diatas, the forest was disturbed before 7,500 years ago. Data from Lake Kumphawapi in northeast Thailand indicate similar disturbance around 6500 BP.<sup>13</sup> A type of weed called *Pteridium aduulinum* (bracken) which often invades dryland rice fields was present 4,000 years ago. Possible rice pollen appears around 2600 BP in Sumatra, but several wild species of rice also grow in that area.<sup>14</sup> It is impossible to distinguish the pollen of wild rice from that of domesticated varieties.<sup>15</sup> In Java, large-scale forest clearance began around 5500 BP.<sup>16</sup>



The data suggest but do not prove that rice or some other dryland crop began to be widely cultivated approximately 3,000 years ago in western Indonesia. Before then, some other types of crops were probably grown, perhaps as early as 7,500 years ago, but the data are sparse and subject to many interpretations.

The oldest rice samples in island Seasia come from Sarawak, East Malaysia, where the site of Sireh Cave has yielded rice grains and husks in pottery, one dated 4300 BP, with stone tools possibly used for harvesting rice and chopping wood.<sup>17</sup> This does not invalidate the Taiwanese hypothesis entirely, but it suggests that contact between Taiwan and insular Seasia may have begun earlier, and continued for a long time, rather than constituting a single event. Migration and exchanges of artifacts, knowledge, and genes may have moved in several directions according to a “reticulated” rather than linear model.<sup>18</sup>

## THE PALAEOLITHIC-NEOLITHIC-BRONZE-IRON AGE SYSTEM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Seasian data from the prehistoric as well as the historic period frequently contradict assumptions that certain types of technology are correlated with the development of patterns of life. Simple examples of these assumed correlations are that pottery indicates sedentary agricultural societies living in villages; that sedentariness leads to population growth; or that the invention of metal-working leads to the formation of stratified societies in which the elite are much better off than the masses. Environmental changes such as increased temperature and decreased rainfall which began in Europe and Mesopotamia at the end of the last glaciation 12,000 years ago have no parallels in Seasia. It is therefore difficult to explain the development of new lifestyles in Seasia; there was undoubtedly change, but of a different sort, and in different sequences than those experienced in Europe and Mesopotamia.

Archaeologists working in Seasia have attempted to deal with sequences of development in technology and society by proposing new terms for chronological periods.<sup>19</sup> These chronological schemes parallel the Western model. More radical rethinking of the problem is necessary. These schemes are descriptive and do not show how or why one stage came to an end and was replaced by a different lifestyle, nor how long this transition took. To be useful, a scheme of periodization should provide a standard set of criteria to mark the division between one stage and the next. A system should not assume that each new period is an advance toward a particular goal.

Almost all schemes proposed for dividing Seasia’s past into chronological units suffer from the same flaw: they assume that one stage replaces the previous one almost instantaneously in a “revolution”,<sup>20</sup> and that the factor which causes change is technology. This approach leads to competition to find the oldest example of some category of material culture. Research suggests that changes in Seasia took place gradually, as the result of evolutionary change, and that technological changes were not correlated with the same kinds of changes in social organization which occurred elsewhere in the world after these forms of technology appeared. For example, when early copper and bronze working first appeared in Seasia, there is no evidence that large-scale political units or complex settlement patterns rapidly followed. Instead the practitioners of early metal working seem to have been part-time craftsmen who worked during much of the year as farmers. Elaborate settlement patterns and disparities in wealth only

appeared approximately 500 years later, around the same time as iron working arose (though this correlation between the appearance of iron and socioeconomic changes cannot be assumed to represent a cause and effect relationship).<sup>21</sup>

## DIFFUSION VS. INDEPENDENT ORIGIN; INFLUENCE VS. APPROPRIATION

Another logical fallacy which has long afflicted Seasia derives from the concept of diffusion. It has been assumed that the relationship between ancient South Asia and Seasia was that of teacher and pupil. In fact, the Sanskrit cosmopolis, which extended from Afghanistan to Bali, had no specific center from which Sanskrit culture radiated; centers of power, including intellectual power, were infinitely reproducible. References to local mountains as Mahendraparvata, the Great God's Mountain, and Mount Sumeru, above which the invisible higher levels of heaven are located, are found all over western Seasia.<sup>22</sup> Sanskrit and Latin both spread over vast areas almost simultaneously beginning around 300 CE, but Latin was spread by conquest and was accompanied by the suppression of written forms of local languages; vernaculars such as French and German were thought to be unworthy of inscription for a millennium. Sanskrit on the other hand quickly became synthesized with Seasian languages, and coexisted with them for centuries. In fact, this process proceeded much more quickly in Seasia than in India, where local languages only began to be used to write sophisticated literary works in the ninth through eleventh centuries, whereas Seasians began writing in vernaculars almost immediately after Sanskrit language and Indic scripts arrived in the region.

In the sphere of prehistory, a little consideration of the role of the environment in shaping technology and the response of one group to a technological innovation made by another group should be sufficient to indicate that technology does not travel where it cannot be reproduced or where its functions are not understood. Seasian tool-makers probably used stone (and later metal) in different ways than people in India or China, because the materials they had to work with, and to work on with their tools, were quite different.<sup>23</sup> Most major scholars who study the evolution of prehistoric Seasian technology attribute major innovations such as metal use and rice agriculture either to migrations of people into the region, or to the imitation of technology invented elsewhere. Either of these mechanisms may indeed have played their roles in bringing new technology to Seasia, but one must note that Seasian cultures remained practically the same after the introduction of new tool types or cropping methods as they had been previously. The weight of evidence seems to suggest that in prehistory, especially the last 1,000 years or so before the beginning of the Protoclassic, technological ideas moved into Seasia from what is now China. This did not, however, entail any parallel adoption of Chinese customs. When the Protoclassic period began, new information technology such as writing and classical art with standardized symbolic systems definitely came from South Asia. On the other hand, those innovations reached Seasia because of advances in two realms: one realm consisted of technological innovations made by Seasians who invented boats capable of sailing long distances and carrying cargo; even more important were internal developments in Seasian social structure and attitudes which gave people both the motivation and the form of collaboration necessary for long and hazardous voyages. It was Seasians who

appropriated the intellectual property of South Asia in the Protoclassic; it was Seasians who appropriated East Asian techniques of metal working and production of surpluses of food for their own reasons, rather than because they were contagious.

## MIGRATION AND IN SITU EVOLUTION

Most major scholars utilize migrations as a major explanatory factor in reconstructions of the developments of this period. Since approximately the year 2000, a huge amount of new data relevant to this subject has become available from genetics. Discoveries and interpretations are evolving rapidly, and what can be said now about this subject will be obsolete in a decade. Nevertheless, it is possible to provide an idea of the direction in which research on Seasian historical genetics is proceeding, and the implications of this picture for relationships among people, cultures, and technology in ancient Seasia.

Genetic evidence suggests that inhabitants of a large segment of Asia, from the central Asian republics through China, Japan, Seasia, southeastern India, Madagascar, and the Pacific islands share a common ancestry, based on the distribution of haplogroup O-M175. This group may have formed between 28,000 and 40,000 years ago. Its center of origin is unknown; it may either have been in China or Seasia.<sup>24</sup> Asian languages and people may descend from one ancestor population, but some languages have no doubt been lost, especially among the remnants of a population which may have been related to the Melanesians, but were overwhelmed by immigrants from the mainland around 6,000 years ago.

Charles Higham and Peter Bellwood have advanced the hypothesis that a powerful agricultural regimen evolved in the Yangzi River valley, leading to population growth and pressure on resources which impelled some people to migrate into less densely populated areas such as Seasia.<sup>25</sup> In insular Seasia, these migrants were the ancestors of the Malayo-Polynesians. Their original point of dispersal was Taiwan, from whence they moved into the Philippines around 5000 BP, and then spread both east and westward as they developed navigational skills. Another group moved southwest into what is now mainland Seasia. W.G. Solheim II suggested that a cultural “package” which spread rapidly through island Seasia, including red-slipped pottery and carved stone ornaments called *lingling-o*, was spread by maritime trade.<sup>26</sup>

This process should be detectable if enough human skeletal material were available for study, but unfortunately human DNA is scarce in Seasian sites before about 4000 BP. Isotopic studies on skeletons from three sites in the upper Mun basin found no evidence of migration.<sup>27</sup> The site of Ban Non Wat has provided a very large database (more than 670 skeletons from burials deposited over a long span of time, 3750 to 1500 BP, including 81 from the very earliest phase of settlement).<sup>28</sup> Data from this and related sites suggest that the transition to agriculture in Thailand (the best documented part of Seasia), as in tropical America, was not a sudden revolution caused by immigration, but a gradual process lasting centuries or millennia during which societies gradually became more dependent on domesticated food sources in comparison with wild foods.<sup>29</sup> DNA and linguistics indicate that the inception of agriculture in Seasia was not connected with major genetic change indicative of migration into the region.<sup>30</sup>

Mitochondrial DNA studies of the people of insular Seasia show little sign that any groups have been isolated for long periods. The least diverse group is the Tengger of highland east Java, who have isolated themselves for the past 500 years. One interesting result of DNA studies is that it shows little connection with China, even including the Austronesian-speaking population of Taiwan. One study suggests that the ancestral population of Indonesia and the Philippines originated on what is now the bottom of the South China Sea during the period when sea level was much lower than today.<sup>31</sup> The populations of mainland and island Seasia may have been genetically separate for a long time; the frequency of Y chromosome D, like mtDNA haplogroup M7, is high in Tibet, Korea, Japan, and Thailand, but is not found in island Seasia.<sup>32</sup> A so-called Polynesian genetic motif found in eastern Indonesia and the Pacific Islands is now thought to have evolved between 17,000 and 11,000 years ago.<sup>33</sup>

Another source of information on the origins of modern Seasian people is derived from teeth. Physical anthropologists have divided teeth into five main groups. One of these is typical of Malayo-Polynesian people; Mongoloids (including Chinese) fall into a different group. People with Malayo-Polynesian type dentition (Sundadonts) do, however, have links with sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>34</sup>

## THE PRECLASSIC PERIOD

The last 1,000 years of prehistory are called "Preclassic" because, although writing did not yet exist in Seasia, many of the social and technological attributes of the Classic period, such as complex settlement patterns; technology; architecture, including construction of monuments from permanent materials; and art, including stone sculpture, already existed. Contact between India, China, and Seasia began in the middle of the Preclassic; exchanges of commodities and ideas among the three regions had been institutionalized for many generations by the time written sources become available. Thus it is necessary to analyze the late prehistoric or Preclassic period in order to be able to appreciate just what happened when history (and the Protoclassic period in archaeology) began. What does the boundary between Preclassic and Classic portend?

Bronze came into use in mainland Seasia in the early Preclassic. Iron was introduced in the middle of this period. We do not have any good data yet for the early development of metallurgy in the insular realm. We can, however, observe that in both areas the first advances in this new technology came in the form of adornment rather than for tools and weapons, adding further to our understanding of the relationship between technology and society.

By the middle of the Preclassic, much of Seasia was linked by a major interaction sphere delineated by large, sophisticated bronze drums found from north Vietnam to New Guinea. They no doubt symbolized different things in different regions, but they shared one attribute: they represented a huge investment in expensive metal and skill. These drums and associated bronze ceremonial objects also shed important light on the relationship between Seasia and China at the time when north Chinese conquered a huge portion of what is now China, but which had been culturally Seasia in the previous era. For 1,000 years Vietnam became part of China, while South Asian cultural traits were appropriated by the western part of Seasia.

## MEGALITHS

In the late Preclassic period, the first signs of complex social hierarchy begin to appear in Seasia. Burials in both mainland and island Seasia contain large quantities of offerings, including pottery, bronze, gold, silver, and the first imports from India: beads of glass and stone. Symbolic architecture also appeared in Indonesia in the form of what have often been called “megaliths”, a term which has caused considerable confusion. In the early period of Seasian archaeology it was thought that a “megalithic culture” existed, and that all large stone monuments of Preclassic style dated from the Preclassic period. We now know that Preclassic-style stone monuments continued to be made until the twentieth century. It is therefore impossible to date these stone monuments by style; some association must be found with datable material, ideally carbon.

The Pasemah area of highland South Sumatra is one of the most important areas where Preclassic stone monuments were concentrated. In addition to terraces on hillsides and alignments of upright stones, statues of what appear to be heroes riding elephants or fighting monstrous beasts were carved; some of them depict the warriors carrying Dongson drums on their backs (Figure 3.1). They were associated with slab graves, some decorated with painted murals depicting mythological creatures and at least one Dongson drum. This enables us to confirm that symbolic representations were created in stone and paint before South Asian motifs were introduced to Seasia.



**Figure 3.1** Sculpted boulder from Pasemah, approximately 500 BCE



## MARITIME SKILLS

Although archaeological evidence is lacking, it is estimated that the Indonesians began to develop elaborate sailing skills and invented the outrigger to stabilize their boats during the Preclassic period, between 1000 BCE and 500 BCE.<sup>35</sup> The discovery of banana phytoliths at Kot Diji, south Pakistan, a site from the Indus Valley civilization which was inhabited around 2000 BCE, indicates that this fruit already reached the northwest part of the South Asian subcontinent. The banana is a native of the equatorial zone of Seasia. Plants from northern Seasia (Assam-Myanmar-Thailand-Laos-Vietnam), including the mango and the ancestor of the lemon, have been found at south Indian sites from 1400 to 1300 BCE. Sandalwood (*Santalum album*) from southeastern Indonesia was brought to southern India by 1300 BCE. It is possible that the tree itself had already been transplanted to India by then. By 400 BCE, Indian legumes such as mung bean and horse gram were shipped to Seasia; Seasian tree crops (areca nut and betel leaves) were taken to India.

Austronesian words for boats and nautical paraphernalia were introduced to South Asia from Seasia, probably around 500 BCE. The technique of adding outriggers and certain sail types was also introduced to South Asia at the same time. Seasian plants reached the east coast of Africa during the Preclassic era. Plants including banana, taro, and yams from Seasia arrived via the east coast of central Africa. By 500 BCE bananas had travelled all the way across the center of the continent to Cameroon.<sup>36</sup>

Late prehistoric Seasia was not a blank slate awaiting the touch of Indian or Chinese culture to begin to write history. It was a complex, dynamic region in which many institutions had already begun to form independently of foreign influence. The Austronesian speakers in particular during this period undertook one of the greatest sets of exploratory travel in history. It was this energy and curiosity which led them to undertake a further set of explorations at the beginning of the Protohistoric period: the exploration of the mind.

## PLEISTOCENE:<sup>37</sup> PALAEOLOGICAL TOOLS AND HUMAN FOSSILS

This is a book about the early historical period in Seasia. Why should it include a section on prehistory? The answer is that the cultural structures into which South Asian cultural elements were inserted approximately 2,000 years ago already existed; Seasian crops and maritime technology moved west at the same time that South Asian religion, sacred literature, and beads were carried east.

Although there are still huge gaps in our understanding of the region before the beginning of history, a clear picture of prehistoric Seasia is emerging. Culture exchanges across the Bay of Bengal can only be appreciated with knowledge of cultural evolution before maritime trade in the Indian Ocean swiftly accelerated 2,000 years ago.

Seasia made important contributions to the genetic composition of the world's population. The first humans in Seasia had to adapt to unique conditions: a generally benign climate and a wide range of resources, but also volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and endemic diseases. It is vital to become familiar with Seasia's prehistoric cultures in order to develop an appreciation for Seasian art, literature, and other

cultural achievements of the historic period. Seasian society in the early Classic was not evolving in a new direction; it perpetuated a way of life which had already found a medium for expressing a view of the world. The artistic vocabularies of Indian (and later Chinese) cultural attainments were avidly used by Seasians when they became available, but these symbolic systems were employed to express abstract ideas about the meaning of life which Seasians had already formulated.

## EARLY RESEARCH ON SEASIAN PALAEONTOLOGY

Almost all fossils of hominids older than 800,000 years found in Seasia have come from central Java.<sup>38</sup> This situation will change some day, but that day has not yet arrived.

Nineteenth-century European scholars suspected that Asia had been one of the first cradles of humanity. Most of the fossils from central Java date from 1.1 million to 1.3 million years ago, but some are considerably older. One specimen from Sangiran, central Java, may be 1.6 million years old, and another has been dated between 1.77 and 1.9 million years.<sup>39</sup> Other sites in the valley of the Solo River include Ngandong, Peking, Kedungbrubus, Sambungmacan, Patiayam, and Ngawi (Figure 3.2).

Unfortunately, most of the finds at Sangiran consist of skulls or teeth. When people die near rivers and their bodies float downstream, their heads often become separated from the rest of their bodies. We are thus left to reconstruct the individuals from their skulls. The few known fragments of long bones from the thighs, shins, and a hip socket reveal that the *Homo erectus* of Java were about 1.7 meters tall when fully grown, walked perfectly upright, and were powerfully built.

Seasia was affected to some extent by changes in temperature and rainfall during the alternation of the earth's climate between glacials and interglacials, but the rainforests of the equatorial region never disappeared. Plants and animals which live at higher elevations lived at lower altitudes during

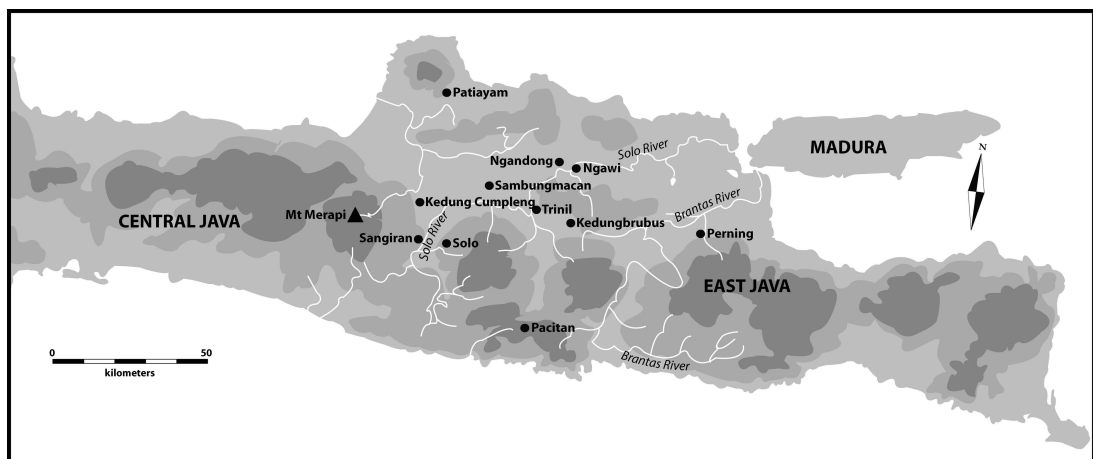
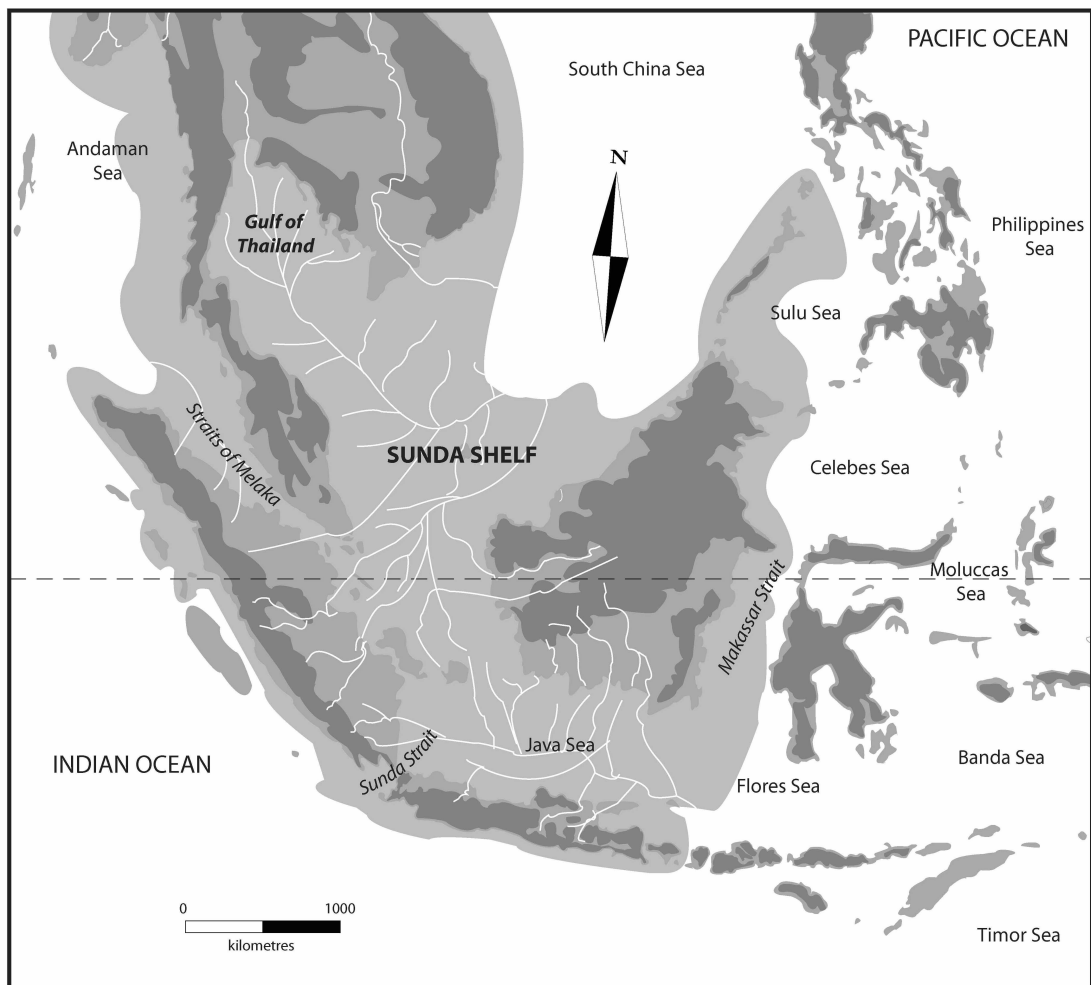


Figure 3.2 Prehistoric sites of Java



colder periods, and the peaks of some mountains may have had permanent snow caps. Sea water was only about 2° colder than today. The dry season in the tropical (monsoonal) zone was probably longer and drier, so that savannah-like conditions may have existed in parts of Borneo and Java, but these dry zones were relieved by wetter areas along mountain slopes and near rivers. Evidence from west Java indicates two periods of severe drought, once around 140,000 years ago, the other between 80,000 and 20,000 years ago when rainfall was 50 per cent to 75 per cent less than today.<sup>40</sup>

The major effect of the glacial periods on Seasia was that sea level rose and fell. Oxygen isotope analysis on the changing sea level in Seasia during the Pleistocene<sup>41</sup> shows that during colder periods, sea level dropped by 40 meters and during 6 per cent of the last 250,000 years by as much as 120 meters.<sup>42</sup> In either case the Sunda Shelf was dry land covering 1.5 million square kilometers (Figure 3.3).



**Figure 3.3** Sunda Shelf and Pleistocene rivers

Two million years ago, Sangiran lay under a shallow lagoon fringed by mangroves. Between 1.85 and 1.65 million years ago volcanic sediments partially filled the lagoon, but the sea periodically returned. Crocodiles and turtles roamed the area, and the fauna included now-extinct mastodons and stegodons (elephants), hippopotamus, rhinoceros, pigs, monkeys, deer, and tigers.<sup>43</sup>

The oldest fossils are classified as *Homo erectus*. The oldest specimen of this type in Java lived at about the same time as the oldest fossils from Africa. About 100 specimens of *Homo erectus* are known; Java has yielded more *Homo erectus* fossils than any other region in Asia. They evolved through three phases. The archaic form dates from 700,000 to 1.7 million years ago. Only fragmentary skulls of this period have so far been found, all in the Sangiran area. One skull, Sangiran 31, has a ridge on the top of the skull resembling what is called a sagittal crest. This feature is found in *Australopithecus*, an older form of hominid which has not yet been firmly identified outside of Africa. Future research may recover more samples of this creature, which had a cranial capacity of between 840 and 1,000 cubic centimeters.

One of the early fossils found in Sangiran still presents a problem. It consists of a very large mandible or jawbone without a chin. It is difficult to draw reliable conclusions from a single jawbone, but it could represent a creature older than *Homo erectus*. Von Koenigswald coined the term *Meganthropus palaeojavanicus* for this creature, under the supposition that it represents a different evolutionary offshoot. It was customary in the early period of human palaeontology to give a new name to almost every specimen discovered. In 1950, Ernst Mayr proposed that many disparate forms from Java and China should be considered the same species.<sup>44</sup> Arguments over classification and dating of Java's fossils continue (Figure 3.4).

The next stage, classic *Homo erectus*, existed from 800,000 to 400,000 years ago. Fossils of this period are rare. Some have been found in Sangiran and Trinil. The most complete skull from Sangiran (Sangiran 17) dates from this phase; it is the only well-preserved face of a Javanese *Homo erectus*. On mainland Seasia, evidence for human habitation believed to date from this period consists of a few teeth from Tham Khuyen<sup>45</sup> and Ma U'Oi, Vietnam<sup>46</sup> and Tham Wiman Nakin, Thailand.<sup>47</sup>

An evolved version of *Homo erectus* existed approximately 150,000 years ago. Representatives of this type have been found at Ngandong, Sungbunmacan, and Ngawi. Their cranial capacity was 1,250 cubic centimeters, a major expansion over their ancestors. Advanced *Homo erectus* from Java could be classified as archaic *Homo sapiens*.<sup>48</sup>

The oldest recorded example of Anatomically Modern Humans (AMH) in mainland Seasia at Tam Pà Ling, Laos, is at least 46,000 years old, and could be 20,000 years earlier.<sup>49</sup> At that time, worldwide sea levels were 60 to 80 meters lower than today. A skull found in Niah Cave, Sarawak, Malaysia, has been dated at around 37,500 years.<sup>50</sup> Another in the Tabon Caves of Palawan, southwest Philippines, is about 22,000 years old.

The oldest securely dated human in Australia lived about 45,000 years ago.<sup>51</sup> To reach Australia, people needed boats large enough to carry more than 10 people and supplies for several days at sea. There are two potential routes for this journey: a southern route from Timor which required a journey across 200 km of open sea, and a northern route via Sulawesi and Halmahera. The people who achieved this feat must have done so repeatedly; DNA analysis indicates that the early migrants numbered several hundred souls. These people were probably foragers adept at exploiting the banks of large rivers. Such



**Figure 3.4** Sangiran World Heritage Site Museum

behavior might have required them to move relatively frequently since food sources in such habits are limited. Their ancestors perhaps reached western Seasia around 50,000 BCE.

Seasia also has the honor of hosting what is believed to have been the last surviving non-*Homo sapiens* member of the hominin line of evolution: *Homo floresiensis*, discovered on the island of Flores in eastern Indonesia.<sup>52</sup> These individuals lived less than 30,000 years ago, thousands of years after AMH had already reached Australia. There is evidence in the form of tools (but no fossils) that *Homo erectus* reached Flores about 800,000 years ago; it is possible that *H. floresiensis* evolved in situ and underwent the process of dwarfism which is common to island fauna, and which gave the species its nickname “the hobbit”.

## PLEISTOCENE TECHNOLOGY

The study of tools of Seasia thought to date from the Pleistocene suffers from uncertainty regarding their original place of discovery, age, and classification. Ralph von Koenigswald collected stones which

he considered tools from Sangiran and Pacitan, on the south coast of central Java. Pacitanian tools are now considered to date from the late Upper Pleistocene, no more than 50,000 years ago.<sup>53</sup>

No confirmed fossils of *Homo erectus* have been found in Seasia outside the Solo River valley, so their presence has to be inferred from artifacts. The first synthesis of Seasian Palaeolithic technology was undertaken by Hallam Movius.<sup>54</sup> In the 1930s and 1940s, scholars proposed several candidates for Early or Middle Pleistocene stone tool cultures such as Anyathian in Myanmar, Fingnoian in Thailand, Tampanian in Malaysia, Pacitanian in Java, and Hoabinhian in Vietnam. All of these except Hoabinhian have either been found to be natural materials or redated to later periods.<sup>55</sup>

Several scholars have claimed to have discovered stone tools in the Solo River valley, in proximity to (though never directly associated with) fossils of *Homo erectus*. A pebble chopper and a retouched flake found at Sambungmacan have been dated to 900,000 years BP, but not all scholars accept this date.<sup>56</sup> Early hominin fossils at Sangiran and the other sites along the Solo River were deposited at the edge of streams and swamps. This is probably not where they lived. Their bodies were probably carried downstream by water from a higher, drier inland environment.

Tools attributed to *Homo erectus* have been reported in recent years from Kedung Cumpleng, where a stream created a delta in the ancient Solo lagoon about 900,000 years ago. Limestone pebble tools found here in 1988 may have been redeposited from the Kedung Hills. One of the few sites with relatively strong evidence of early Palaeolithic tool use is Ngebung, Sangiran. In a layer above a horizon called the Grenzbank which is 700,000 years old, excavation revealed artifacts probably made in situ by *Homo erectus*, comprising cores, blades, and flakes made of andesite with one quartz pebble brought from the mountains to the south which was used as a hammer stone.<sup>57</sup> Some, however, believe that the tools may have been derived from a younger layer.<sup>58</sup>

The apparent dearth of stone tools has led scholars to construct explanations based on the use of other material. It is highly likely that Seasians used materials other than stone for many tools. Bamboo is one of the favourite candidates as a material for tools.<sup>59</sup> One study has concluded that clam shells were used to butcher a bovid at Sangiran between 1.6 and 1.5 million years ago, based on cut marks on the bones. This would be the oldest evidence for the use of shell as a tool in the world.<sup>60</sup> Another scholar who studied a molar from the Sangiran 4 fossil suggested that the pattern of wear on the tooth indicated a vegetable diet. Reliance on plants might lessen the need for stone tools.<sup>61</sup>

## PALAEOLITHIC ARTIFACTS BEYOND JAVA

In the Soa Basin on the island of Flores, several hundred kilometers east of Java, fossils and stone tools have been found at more than 15 sites. The fossils include extinct elephants, giant rats, crocodiles, and shellfish. At the richest site, Mata Menge, 507 stone artifacts were found. As with the hominin fossils in Java, the tools had apparently been washed downstream and so did not directly reflect human activity at that particular site. They lay between two layers of volcanic tuff which were dated between 880,000 and 800,000 years ago.<sup>62</sup> In form and material they closely resemble stone tools found in Liang Bua, a nearby cave site where the *H. floresiensis* fossils were found. The first AMH who came to Flores used

very different kinds of stones and stoneworking techniques, and wore jewellery such as beads. It is not thought that *H. erectus* or *H. floresiensis* knew how to make water craft, but the widest stretch of open water needed to reach Flores from Java is 20 to 25 kilometers.

Mae Tha and Ban Don Mun in northern Thailand yielded pebble tools beneath a layer of basalt which is 730,000 years old.<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately, the sample dated was collected 11.5 and 5.7 kilometers from the locations to which the dates are said to be related. A date of 550,000 for the basalt underlying the artifacts has been obtained.<sup>64</sup>

An excavation at Sao Din, north-central Thailand, in about 2011 yielded six artifacts and a piece of petrified wood. Typologically the artifacts are comparable to some from southern China dated between 1 million and 500,000 years ago.<sup>65</sup> Typological comparisons alone are, of course, not very reliable.

In northeast Cambodia, surface survey of terraces along the Mekong River between Stung Treng and Kratie in the 1960s yielded lithic artifacts. One site, Sre Sbau, lies on a terrace estimated to date from 780,000 BP. No excavations have yet been undertaken in this part of Cambodia where surface finds were collected.<sup>66</sup>

## UPPER PALAEOLITHIC

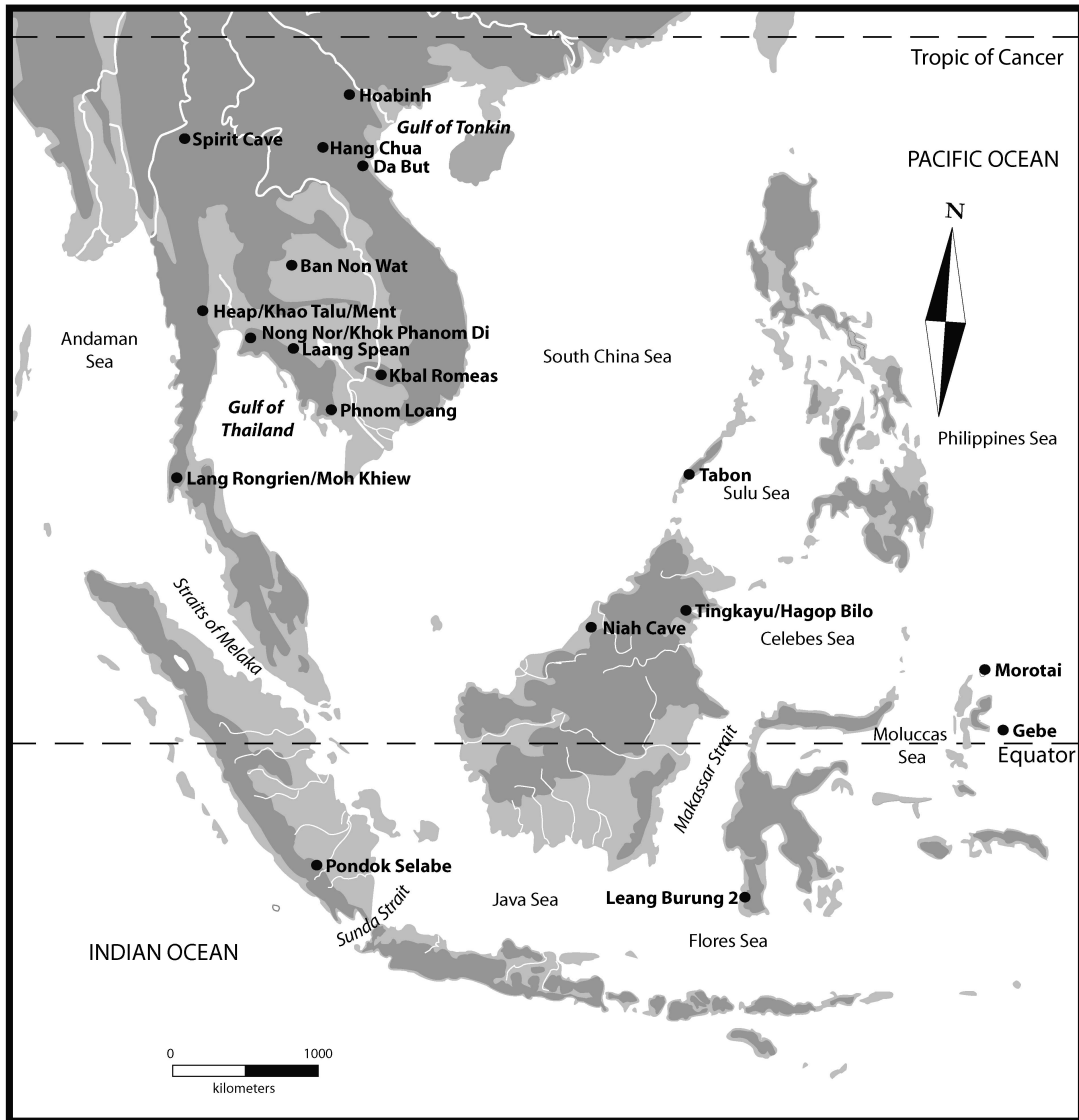
The Upper Palaeolithic period is correlated with the advent of AMH. As already noted, this is believed to have happened approximately 47,000 years ago. Sites from this period include Niah Cave (Figure 3.5). After some controversy, a date for a skull of 40,000 BP was confirmed.<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately, the early excavation of the cave was not done by a trained archaeologist, and no proper reports were published. A subsequent study found that late Palaeolithic tools found in the cave were made with “smash and grab” technology aimed at producing flakes.<sup>68</sup> The most recent research has found strong evidence that the first human activity in the cave, including ash, butchered animal bone, and artifacts, occurred between 47,000 and 50,000 BP.<sup>69</sup>

Research in Sabah in the 1980s revealed a series of sites dating back to 30,000 BP.<sup>70</sup> The Tingkayu River area revealed an exceptionally well-made stone tool industry, which may partly owe its existence to the availability of a type of stone suitable for making long parallel-sided blade tools. The only other location in Seasia with such artistic and technologically sophisticated flaking technology has been found at Lang Rongrien, peninsular Thailand. Although these two sites are approximately contemporary, they lie more than 1,000 kilometers apart.

Tingkayu stone tools were succeeded by a different but possibly related industry found at Hagop Bilo, which was occupied 18,000 to 12,000 years ago.<sup>71</sup> Some of the stone blades found here have opal phytolith gloss on their edges, the result of use for cutting grasses with silica in the stems. Although there are no burials in Hagop Bilo, there are traces of red ochre, suggesting some ritual.

Just east of the Wallace Line, in the Maros region of southwestern Sulawesi, a series of limestone caves provided excellent habitats for early AMH. Leang Burung 2 in South Sulawesi yielded a radiocarbon date of 28,898.<sup>72</sup> A similar date has been obtained for paintings in a nearby cave. Stone tools from here show a high degree of skill in making flakes with retouch, including some artifacts which may have been early projectile points (arrowheads).<sup>73</sup> Edge gloss and red ochre are also found in this cave, as in Hagop Bilo.





**Figure 3.5** Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene sites

In 2001 a team surveyed an area in highland South Sumatra called Pondok Selabe on small streams which flow into a tributary of the Musi, where a karstic landscape provides numerous cave shelters and subsistence resources. The cave sites yielded Hoabinhian-type tools with radiocarbon dates over 9,000 years. Stone implements typologically identified as Palaeolithic were found at a number of locations, but since they were surface finds, no radiometric dates could be obtained.<sup>74</sup>

In the far northeast of Seasia, human presence 32,000 years ago has been documented at the island of Gebe.<sup>75</sup> The Tanjungpinang site, Morotai, yielded artifacts and shells in upper layers dated between 3390 and 8860, and a date of 37,500 BP, but the only materials at this level were shells. It is therefore not

possible to infer that humans were living there at this time, though the probability that the shells were deposited there naturally is low, given that the site was 60 to 80 meters above sea level at that time.<sup>76</sup>

In the Philippines, the major Palaeolithic site thus far identified is situated on the island of Palawan, in the southwestern part of the archipelago. The Tabon Caves, excavated from 1962 to 1966, yielded radiocarbon dates in the Holocene, above older dates of >21,000, >22,000,  $23,000 \pm 1,000$ , and  $30,500 \pm 1,100$  BP associated with flake assemblages. A fifth flake assemblage was estimated to be 45,000 to 50,000 years old, based on “depth-age” estimates (assuming a constant rate of soil accumulation in the cave).<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, “Palaeolithic culture” has been described as persisting into the Holocene in Palawan.<sup>78</sup> In Cambodia, Mourer<sup>79</sup> identified Upper Palaeolithic-type artifacts in the lower strata of the Laang Spean rock shelter, northwest Cambodia, and in two cave sites (Kbal Romeas, Phnom Loang) in the southern part of the country.

Lang Rongrien in the isthmian region of the Siam-Malay Peninsula is another of the small group of early Upper Palaeolithic sites to have been excavated systematically in Seasia. Twelve dates obtained there fall into two phases. Seven dates range between about 7,600 and 9,600 years ago, thus early Holocene. The other five dates are much older: four fall between 27,000 and 38,100, while the last date is beyond the range of radiocarbon dating, and thus must be older than 44,000 years. This sample, however, is out of stratigraphic order, and so should not be considered further. Artifacts from the younger phase belong to the Hoabinhian technocomplex. The older phase yielded two objects of bone and one of antler, plus 44 stone artifacts, mainly flakes which are not as well made as those from Tingkeyu or Leang Burung 2. The excavator compared them with those found in southern China at the same period.<sup>80</sup>

The Pleistocene-Holocene climatic transition had a major effect on Seasia’s topography: a large part of the region was rapidly submerged by rising seas. There is, however, a category of artifacts which seems to have been produced in both the late Pleistocene and during much of the Holocene. This category, termed “Hoabinhian” after a site in north Vietnam, was originally thought to date from the Neolithic period, but Chester Gorman<sup>81</sup> followed by later scholars pushed back the dates of this artifact type to 30,000 years ago. The later Hoabinhian, and problems of its definition, will be dealt with in detail in the next section of this book. Here we will list late Pleistocene sites which have been included in this category. In Thailand, Lang Rongrien includes Hoabinhian material in a layer dated between  $11,690 \pm 280$  and  $8760 \pm 135$  BP (uncalibrated). Shoocongdej dated Hoabinhian artifacts in Tham Lad to the period of 32,400 to 12,100 BP (uncalibrated). V. Nguyen reported dates of 30,000 to 28,000 for Tham Khuang in Vietnam. Pookajorn’s site of Mah Khiew contained Hoabinhian material spanning the period between  $25,800 \pm 600$  BP to  $8420 \pm 90$  (calibrated). Hang Cho cave, northern Vietnam, has Hoabinhian material as old as  $29,140 \pm 200$  BP.<sup>82</sup>

## SUMMARY

Most of our knowledge about the Pleistocene in Seasia comes from a small area in Java. This is a very narrow foundation on which to base interpretations of a period lasting 1.5 million years during which our ancestors evolved from a minor member of the group of large-bodied mammals into anatomically



modern people who spread throughout the world, reaching America just at the end of the Pleistocene. The only habitable part of the globe remaining to be settled in the Holocene was the vast Pacific. The record from Java, small though it is, is the densest in data of any part of the world, Africa included.

Any subject as complicated as human evolution with so little data is bound to excite a wide range of opinions. The same stricture applies to technological evolution. Few tools can be confidently accepted as representing Seasia's Palaeolithic stage of development. Seasians had a wide range of materials at hand, but few deposits of nice siliceous stone such as chert, flint, or obsidian, so much of that data is forever lost.

The following stage of development, the Neolithic, coincided with the era when the earth became warmer and sea level rose, covering about 40 per cent of Seasia and putting it beyond the reach of scholars for the foreseeable future. Climate and acid soil ensured that few perishable materials would survive to give modern scientists the opportunity to study them. The late prehistoric period poses many riddles which have not yet been solved. However, it is clear that Seasia, far from being a "crude, colorless and unenterprising" zone of human evolution, was an area of considerable experimentation and invention. Anatomically Modern Humans who reached Java did not stop there; they swiftly made their way across Wallacea and reached Australia. On the way they created some of the oldest art in the world in Maros, south Sulawesi. This combination of artistic aspiration and eagerness to explore new environments will appear again during the next chapter of the story, the Preclassic, when Seasians developed unique forms of agriculture including animal husbandry and plant domestication, and worked metal. They also developed technical and intellectual skills which enabled them to spread over the Pacific and Indian Oceans, a feat they achieved before first written sources began to appear.

## THE HOLOCENE: FROM THE END OF THE ICE AGE TO THE BEGINNING OF HISTORY

The Holocene, or Recent, period began approximately 10,000 years ago. The transitional period to modern climatic conditions lasted about 5,000 years, during which glaciers in northern Asia, Europe, and North America gave way to forests. This was not the case in Seasia. Climatological, botanical, and faunal studies demonstrate that Seasia's environment changed little between the late Pleistocene and the present.<sup>83</sup> The most important change in Seasia was caused by rising sea level, which flooded 40 per cent of the region and forced humans who lived where the South China Sea is now to migrate.

Archaeologists in the nineteenth century developed the Three Age System (Palaeolithic/Old Stone Age, Mesolithic/Middle Stone Age, and Neolithic/New Stone Age) to periodize world prehistory, based on the assumption that changes in stone technology (which is well preserved) are correlated with changes in subsistence, settlement patterns, and population density (which are much harder to observe). In Europe, Africa, and much of Asia, the transition from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic coincides with a shift from hunting and gathering of wild food to farming. In Seasia, stone tools of the type called Hoabinhian began to be made in the late Pleistocene, when people were still hunters and gatherers, and continued to be made after Seasians became farmers. This has caused some archaeologists to ask whether the Three Age System has any meaning in Seasia. Some Seasian prehistorians do

not consider the “lithic” ages valid for use in discussing Seasian prehistoric chronology,<sup>84</sup> but others defend their use.<sup>85</sup>

The Palaeolithic is synonymous with hunting and gathering, and the Neolithic is correlated with agriculture,<sup>86</sup> but more nuanced definitions of these terms are needed. The inception of the Neolithic could be defined as a period when evidence for active cultivation of domesticated food sources appears, but the first instance of any sort of technological or social change can almost never be identified. The Mesolithic was conceived as a transitional phase characterized by a gradual shift from dependence on wild food sources to reliance on domesticated food.<sup>87</sup> That the transition was not instantaneous is demonstrated by research in the Valley of Mexico.<sup>88</sup> Not only was the transition to domesticated food sources gradual, but also it occurred at different rates among different groups, and the proportion of reliance on wild food vs. domesticated food sources at various stages was different in different places. The proportion of calories obtained from domesticated food sources increased, but many groups in Mexico continued to rely on non-domesticated sources, for example, fishermen and sedentary farmers who also foraged.

Domestication of rice or water buffalo did not occur suddenly; it required a period of mutual adjustment between humans who exerted new selective pressure on the wild forebears of the domesticated species and the plants and animals which responded favourably to this human interference in selection. Rice, wheat, and maize respond at different rates to human efforts to emphasize the features of these food sources which most benefit humans. Some mutations which benefit humans result from a few genes, and are thus more easily affected by selective breeding, while others originate from a wider variety of genetic mutations and are thus slower to yield results. It is true that the process of domestication creates broadly similar effects on those human groups which involve themselves in that process, but it is equally true that the effects of different availability of plants and animals for domestication, and the different responses of those plants and animals to non-human environmental factors such as climate and topography, are correlated with differences in the nature and rate of human cultural evolution. It may be necessary to retain the Three Age System for the sake of comparison with other parts of the world, while acknowledging that these labels can manifest themselves in very different ways and have only vague and imprecise implications for the correlation between technology and social structure. Future scholars will have much work to do to unravel the complex web of relations between the environment, human biology, and social evolution under the special conditions in the unique region of prehistoric Southeast Asia.

## HOABINHIAN

The term “Mesolithic” is rarely used in Seasia, but artifacts classified as Hoabinhian could qualify for this label since they were made during the period when Seasians underwent the transition from 100 per cent reliance on hunting and gathering to a strategy in which food production contributes a significant proportion of all food consumed. Hoabinhian artifacts may have been invented during the phase when Seasians began to practice horticulture. This was not a threshold; it was a long-term

process marked by a gradual transition from hunting-gathering to agriculture on a regional, but not always local, scale.

Archaeologist Madeleine Colani coined the term “Hoabinhian” in the 1920s to refer to stone tools recovered from approximately 60 sites in northern Vietnam, of which was called Hoabinh.<sup>89</sup> Later scholars have defined the concept of Hoabinhian in various ways: as an archaeological phase; an archaeological culture defined by an assemblage of Mesolithic (“Middle Stone”) stone tools used by hunter-gatherer groups;<sup>90</sup> an adaptation which marks a transition from hunting and gathering to horticulture;<sup>91</sup> and as a technocomplex.<sup>92</sup> The oldest Hoabinhian artifacts have been dated to the Pleistocene, well before domestication of plants and animals, or horticulture, is believed to have emerged:<sup>93</sup> at Tham Lod (dates range from 32,400–12,100 BP uncalibrated)<sup>94</sup> and Tham Khuong in Vietnam (30,000–28,000 BP uncalibrated).<sup>95</sup>

The concept of technocomplex was created to represent heterogeneous groups which shared “a polythetic range but differing specific types of the same general families of artifact-types” produced “as a widely diffused and interlinked response to common factors in environment, economy, and technology”.<sup>96</sup> Chester Gorman argued that Hoabinhian assemblages should be considered a technocomplex (rather than a “culture”) and that continuity in Hoabinhian stone tools was correlated with continuous environmental and ecological conditions during the late Pleistocene and Holocene. Gorman suggested that the Hoabinhian technocomplex was transformed after 5000 BCE and began to include domestication of plants, production of cord-marked ceramics, and changes in stone production techniques such as edge grinding, and these changes may represent a change in technology or culture.<sup>97</sup> Gorman suggested that edge-grinding represented either a recent technological change within the Hoabinhian technocomplex, which was not connected with any change in the use of the tools, or it reflected new unrelated cultural elements introduced into the Hoabinhian area.<sup>98</sup> The categorization of Hoabinh is still controversial: it is often termed an “industry”, and some scholars strenuously object to the equation of Hoabinh with Mesolithic.<sup>99</sup>

Stone tools labeled Hoabinhian are found in Vietnam, Thailand, northern Sumatra, and Cambodia. Some even suggest that tools characteristic of Hoabinhian were distributed from Northeast India to Australia<sup>100</sup> and Japan.<sup>101</sup> Hoabinhian tools comprise several types: 1) unifacial flaked tools produced from pebbles, 2) Sumatraliths or core tools with complete flaking on one side of a pebble and grinding stones, and 3) used flakes displaying signs of edge damage. These tools were often found in association with food remains such as shellfish, fish, and “small and medium-sized animals”, rock shelters located near fresh water streams, and tools exhibiting the edge-grinding technique of stone tool production sometimes found in association with cord-marked ceramics in more recent Hoabinhian strata.

Gorman found what he described as “a subcultural assemblage of the Hoabinhian technocomplex” during research at Spirit Cave in the Salween drainage in northwest Thailand between 1965 and 1966.<sup>102</sup> He identified two main cultural levels at Spirit Cave. Hoabinhian artifacts in Cultural Level I comprise mainly “sumatraliths” or unifacial worked pebble tools, grinding stones which bore traces of ochre (iron oxide), and a large quantity of utilized flake tools bearing “edge-damage patterns”. Unique artifacts were small calcite blades made by pressure-flaking, a technique requiring great skill. Gorman did not name Cultural Level II, which continued to show the presence of Hoabinhian artifacts, but new artifacts appeared, including ground and polished quadrangular adzes and slate knives, and cord-marked and burnished ceramics. Radiocarbon dates of approximately 7500 BP indicated that these edge-grinding

tools might be the earliest dated examples in mainland Seasia. Ceramics representing about 20 vessels were found on the surface of Layer 2 and in Layer 1, and comprised two types: one cord marked, the other burnished.

Floral and faunal remains indicated exploitation of a range of faunal habitats. The range of environmental niches and animal species suggested “more sophisticated hunting equipment” than indicated by the stone tools, implying a toolkit of perishable material. The hearths, bamboo charcoal, and uncharred bones suggested that animals were cut into small pieces and cooked in bamboo containers.

A Thai-French team has reported Hoabinhian stone tools from Pho So, also on the eastern bank of the Salween River. The survey provided evidence of regional variability. A test trench exposed an archaeological sequence from which a small adze was recovered from the top layer, and a cobble and a sumatralith from the bottom layer. A layer containing potsherds yielded a calibrated carbon date of  $3700 \pm 30$  BP.<sup>103</sup> Three sites in southern Thailand—Khao Talu, Ment, and Heap—yielded three cultural layers dating from 11,000 to 2000 BP (non-calibrated).<sup>104</sup> The oldest layer containing large cobble and flake tools was attributed to the early Hoabinhian; the second level which included pottery was dated to the Late Hoabinhian (4500–2000 BP); the most recent level comprised ground stone artifacts, new types of earthenware, beads, and artifacts similar to those in the previous two levels, suggestive of a “‘transitional’ Neolithic-Bronze Age (2500–1000 BP)”.

In peninsular Malaysia and Sumatra, Hoabinhian tools are found in rock shelters dated to 11,000 BP, and inland caves in many limestone massifs in northern peninsular Malaysia.<sup>105</sup> Large shell middens up to 100 meters in diameter and 10 meters deep once existed in Sumatra and the northern part of peninsular Malaysia, but almost all have been quarried for lime.<sup>106</sup>

Hoabinhian was a complex transitional phase marked by a gradual increasing reliance on domesticated food sources during a long period which included the later Pleistocene and much of the Holocene. The stone tools reflect a gradual transition to horticulture. The gradual increase of domesticated food does not mean that peoples stopped hunting, gathering, and foraging; this explains why the late Hoabinhian includes both stone tools typical of the Hoabinhian and a more limited number indicative of change, possibly as a result of technological appropriation, in the form of edge-ground tools. Such observations support the view that the Hoabinhian was not a major watershed in Seasian prehistory; it was an important phase, but the changes encountered during this phase occurred gradually and differentially throughout the region. Hoabinhian was thus a phase in a process of change, not a revolutionary conjuncture in Seasian prehistory.

## NEOLITHIC = AGRICULTURE?

The Neolithic Age is characterized by the attainment of a certain level of dependence on domesticated food sources. Although a large proportion of human groups in Seasia formed settled agricultural societies during this period, farming did not completely replace hunting and gathering. Important developments including domestication of rice and animals such as pigs and cattle first began in the Yangzi River Valley,<sup>107</sup> which was then the northern border of what was linguistically and ecologically tropical

Southeast Asia, but the precise dating of these events is still debated. Some scholars believed it began around 6000 BCE, whereas the earliest known evidence for food production in what is now Seasia as defined by political borders appeared sometime between 3000 and 2000 BCE.<sup>108</sup>

Bellwood asserts that the transition to agriculture stimulated the movement of people from China to Taiwan, then to the Philippines and island Seasia.<sup>109</sup> Blust advocated a second overland movement of agriculturists via the Yangzi River Valley to Yunnan, then south and west into Seasia and northeast India.<sup>110</sup> Population growth may have been associated with agricultural production, but this has not been established. Archaeologists have found permanent village communities with burials containing bodies in an extended, supine position and accompanied by mortuary goods comprising pottery bearing incised and impressed decorations from southern China to Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia. Other similarities between southern China and Seasia include rice, skeletal domestic dogs, pigs, and cattle, and spindle whorls implying weaving.<sup>111</sup>

The adoption of farming in Seasia seems to have been a slow process. Bellwood suggests the slow expansion may be attributable to “cross-latitudinal movement”, resistance from hunter-gatherers in a “Friction Zone”, and other unknown factors. The southward movement of Neolithic agriculture may have been “a trickle” rather than “a deluge”.<sup>112</sup> Aside from the nature of the relationship between hunter-gatherers and farmers, other questions concern the extent to which agriculture replaced hunting and gathering. Some groups in Seasia still prefer to pursue hunting and gathering rather than settled farming; the shift to a sedentary way of life is not inevitable or necessarily attractive. The retention of a traditional non-agrarian lifestyle is as logical as a change to a new and untested way of life.

Hoabinhian societies were not necessarily simple. Excavation in Spirit Cave in 2002 revealed that different parts of the cave were used for different functions: some parts contained hearths and showed evidence of habitation; others did not have hearths and appear to have been used for manufacturing stone tools. Four skeletons were excavated including an adult, dated to approximately 12,000 BP, laid in an extended position and buried with shellfish.<sup>113</sup> Similar burials in other Hoabinhian sites demonstrate that possessors of this technology believed in an afterlife.

Hunter-gatherers inhabited caverns near streams on higher ground inland, but close enough to the sea to enable them to exploit marine resources. Such habitats enabled late Pleistocene people in Japan and the lower Yangzi Valley to become sedentary without adopting agriculture. Many if not all of these caves must have been temporary shelters used by people who spent most of their time elsewhere, probably near the sea coast. Bands of hunter-gatherers sheltered in Lang Rongrien cave, southern Thailand, for short periods over a long span of time. Charcoal samples from the hearths yielded dates at least 38,000 years old.<sup>114</sup> Deep deposits in Niah Cave show similar short-term occupation by hunter-gatherers.<sup>115</sup> Sites in Vietnam and southern China also reflect a “marine adaptation” among populations whose burials were associated with pottery vessels, ground stone tools, and skeletons in flexed position. These have been assumed to be Neolithic, but no evidence of agriculture or animal domestication was observed.<sup>116</sup> They may have been prosperous hunter-gatherers dependent on wild marine sources of food for much of their subsistence.

A site in lowland eastern Thailand, Nong Nor, contained a shell midden, remains of large sea animals including eagle rays and bull sharks, potsherds, polished stone tools, and burials with flexed human

remains accompanied by mortuary pottery vessels, but no evidence of rice or domesticated animal remains.<sup>117</sup> The people of Nong Nor may have been related to those of a nearby site, Khok Phanom Di, which has yielded an excellent archaeological sequence with which to analyze the transition from hunting and gathering to domestication. Khok Phanom Di, excavated between 1984 and 1985, was utilized between about 2000 and 1500 BCE. The date 2000 BCE is significant because many scholars believe it marks the approximate date when the first rice farmers appear in Seasian archaeological records. The people who occupied Khok Phanom Di during its first three phases may have been descendants of Nong Nor, based on similarities in artifacts.<sup>118</sup> They were marine-oriented hunter-gatherers.

Khok Phanom Di yielded eight burial phases. The earliest phase contains six graves; they had a good diet, but displayed signs of illness. Three individuals show signs of a condition called thalassemia which would have given them resistance against malaria, but also anemia. In this swampy environment, thalassemia might have enabled people to live to reproductive age although they might not live past 30.<sup>119</sup>

The people of the next phase were well fed and physically strong, probably because of activities such as canoeing, fishing, and pottery-making. However, infant mortality was high. Burial practices increased in complexity during the site's occupation; one body was wrapped in an asbestos shroud sprinkled with red ochre and laid on a wooden bier. Accompanying pottery vessels and other grave goods also display increasing complexity.<sup>120</sup>

Significant changes appeared in the third mortuary phase: tools used in agriculture such as a granite hoe and shell reaping knives appeared. Domesticated rice remains were found in the faeces of one burial; food residue preserved in the waterlogged environment in another individual's abdomen consists of fish bones and scales as well as rice chaff. The proportion of shellfish in the diet decreased. Isotopic analysis of teeth indicates that some women previously lived in farming communities before moving to Khok Phanom Di. Where these farming communities were located is unknown: they must have been situated in inland plains where sites have been destroyed by deforestation, sedimentation, and modern land use.<sup>121</sup> This does, however, suggest contact and possible symbiosis between foragers and early agricultural societies rather than friction.

Ban Non Wat was initially settled in the mid-seventeenth century BCE.<sup>122</sup> Interred in the graves are biological remains of domestic pigs, cattle, and dogs and rice, middens of shellfish and fish, and wild animal bones, such as deer. Individuals were buried in an extended supine position accompanied by elaborate pottery vessels bearing incised and painted decorations, much like other early Neolithic sites in central Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.<sup>123</sup> Cowrie shell ornaments found among the burial items, and shellfish and fish in the middens, indicate exchange between these sites and coastal communities; hunter-gatherers and rice farmers appeared to have used the same sites for burials during the same phase.<sup>124</sup> Burials from the third mortuary phase contained artifacts characterizing agricultural activities such as harvesting knives made from shells, granite hoes, rice, growing sophistication in pottery decoration, and remains of mice and *Oryzophilus surinamensis*, two species which inhabited rice barns, in human faeces.<sup>125</sup> Thalassemia continued to be common at Ban Non Wat in the third phase. Isotope analysis and variant forms of blood disorder genes suggest movement between communities, particularly of some females. The position of women in Ban Non Wat rose over the next three phases, related to their pottery-making abilities, evident from mortuary pottery and stress in bones. Sea level



changes around the end of mortuary phase 4 saw a return to marine hunting and gathering; cultivation of rice ceased.

Ban Non Wat demonstrates that the expansion of Neolithic farmers into Seasia did not result in replacement of hunting and gathering by rice or other cultivation. The relationship between early farming communities and hunter-gatherers seems to have been symbiotic, not antagonistic. The examples of female individuals from Neolithic communities who joined hunter-gatherers demonstrate the permeability of boundaries between these societies. Ban Non Wat also shows that the same communities may engage in farming and hunting and gathering at different times, and change can go either way, dependent on factors such as sea level change. Genetic studies of the Senoi, modern shifting agriculturalists in the border area of south Thailand and north peninsular Malaysia, show that they carry a strong admixture of Haplogroup Flala, indicating that they originated from the Seasian mainland sometime over the past 7,000 years.<sup>126</sup> The Senoi may be descendants of Neolithic farmers who intermarried with indigenous hunter-gatherers.<sup>127</sup>

The story of the Neolithic in Seasia is one of gradual addition of sedentary agriculture as an option for residents of a region where hunting and gathering was also viable. Bellwood and Diamond proposed a swift and rapid expansion of farmers into the region which Bellwood suggests might have been met by resistance from the existing hunter-gatherers, hence demarcating areas where the two groups had contact as a friction zone.<sup>128</sup> Oppenheimer and Higham advocate a more gradual and differentiated advance of agriculturalists into the region, and Higham goes further to state that agriculture did not result in the end of hunting and gathering.<sup>129</sup>

## TOALIAN

More industries/technocomplexes of the Seasian Holocene epoch remain to be discovered and defined. An example of a different technocomplex has been found in southwestern Sulawesi: Toalian (named after a local hunter-gatherer population, the To'ala, "people of the caves"). The new tools which emerged in this technocomplex are blades, flakes, geometric microliths, serrated and hollow-based stone points, and pointed bone tools.<sup>130</sup> Other unusual stone tools include Maros points, which resembled arrowheads and bore serrated edges.

Like Hoabinhian tools, Toalian overlapped for a long time with the phase when pottery was produced. The Toalian toolkit was suitable for people who gathered wild seeds and nuts, collected shellfish, and hunted wild animals.<sup>131</sup> Some sites in the area with Toalian tools contain cave art once assumed to have been made in the Holocene, but which recent research shows are much older.<sup>132</sup>

## THE EARLY METAL AGE: METAL AND SOCIETY

The earliest dates for metal in Seasia are found on the mainland. There does not seem to have been a separate Bronze Age in the island region: bronze appeared at the same time as iron.<sup>133</sup> The Metal Age



in the Indo-Malaysian archipelago began around 200 BCE. Sites of early farming groups in Seasia have not yielded any evidence of metallurgy.<sup>134</sup> Two theoretical models advocate dates for mainland Seasian bronze which differ by 1000 years: 2000 BCE (Long Chronology Model, LCM) and approximately 1000 BCE (Short Chronology Model, SCM), and different places of origin.

French scholars in the colony of Indochina inaugurated the study of the Seasian Bronze Age. In 1879, M. Moura obtained bronze artifacts from villagers at Samrong Sen in Cambodia, including an axe, fishhooks, arrowheads, and bangles. French scholars found more bronze items assumed to have been prehistoric at Luang Prabang in Laos and other sites in the upper Black River.

A major advance in the study of the Metal Age in Seasia began with excavations at Non Nok Tha, northeast Thailand, between 1965 and 1968, which revealed a cemetery with bronze objects such as axes and moulds for making them. Based on two radiocarbon dates from the site, Solheim proposed a third millennium BCE dating for the Non Nok Tha bronzes, predating Chinese bronze culture by 1,000 years.<sup>135</sup> This claim generated widespread interest in Seasia. Solheim claimed in 1972 that a socketed axe from Non Nok Tha dated to 3500 BCE, the oldest in the world.<sup>136</sup> Solheim's student Chester Gorman and his Thai co-investigator Pisit Charoenwongsa excavated another northeastern Thai site at Ban Chiang, and collected charcoal samples from grave fill which led to the assertion that the Bronze Age there could be dated to the fourth millennium BCE. These claims were supported by evidence from a newly developed dating technique called thermoluminescence which could be applied to pottery.<sup>137</sup> Some archaeologists accepted these early dates and began to examine the implications of a Seasian bronze age predating that of Shang China, one of the few pristine complex societies in world history.<sup>138</sup> Other scholars were skeptical about these astonishing conclusions.<sup>139</sup>

More charcoal samples taken from grave fill were dated together with a few samples derived from in situ hearths. On the basis of these dates, Gorman and Charoenwongsa claimed that the Bronze Age began in 3600 BCE in Seasia, and that iron-forging began in 1600 BCE.<sup>140</sup> This assertion split scholars, a division which continues to the present day. Joyce White, the major proponent of the LCM, has proposed that the Bronze Age began in mainland Seasia around 2000 BCE based on dates from Ban Chiang (Figure 3.6).<sup>141</sup>

If bronze working in Seasia predated China, was China influenced by Seasia? If Seasians did not develop bronze-working independently, when did Seasian bronze technology originate? Did technology transfer take place? These questions would be asked even if the inception of the Seasian Bronze Age were postponed by another 1,000 years.

That China was the origin of Seasian metallurgy is a view held by a different group of scholars, including Higham, Ciarla, and Pigott.<sup>142</sup> Part of the skepticism regarding Ban Chiang stems from the context from which the carbon samples were obtained. Of the samples obtained by Gorman and Charoenwongsa in the 1970s, only a few came from in situ hearths; the rest came from grave fill which might have been redeposited. Bronze artifacts were recovered from burials at Ban Chiang, but no bronze casting moulds or furnaces or copper ingots were found in situ. Subsequent research at numerous sites has failed to confirm the LCM of the Bronze Age in Seasia.

Ban Na Di, another site in northeastern Thailand, chronologically overlapped with Ban Chiang but does not have a Neolithic or early Bronze Age sequence. There is clear stratigraphy at Ban Na



**Figure 3.6** Ban Chiang open-air site museum

Di contextualized by many burials, hearths, and, most importantly, bronze casting furnaces<sup>143</sup> which demonstrate that bronze technology was in use at Ban Na Di, rather than represented only by artifacts which might have been traded or exchanged. Higham suggests that comparison of the carbon dates from Ban Na Di and Ban Chiang indicates that the Bronze Age in Ban Chiang began much later than 2000 BCE.

Thosarat and Higham's eight seasons at Ban Non Wat in the Mun Valley, approximately 240 kilometers south of Ban Chiang, yielded a rich cultural sequence, including one hunter-gatherer, two Neolithic, six Bronze Age, and three Iron Age phases.<sup>144</sup> The team excavated 640 human burials and recovered 5,000 complete pottery vessels, and more than 250,000 shell beads, and obtained 76 AMS radiocarbon dates<sup>145</sup> which provide a sequence from the Neolithic to the end of the Iron Age. The Bronze Age at Ban Non Wat began around 1000 BCE. Burials associated with this phase contained luxury items such as boat-shaped wooden coffins, good-quality decorated pots, copper axes, thousands of shell beads, and exotic marble and marine-shell bangles. These Bronze Age individuals had accumulated much wealth compared with previous phases. A comparison of Ban Non Wat and Ban Chiang burials shows that Ban Chiang individuals were considerably impoverished, assuming that the

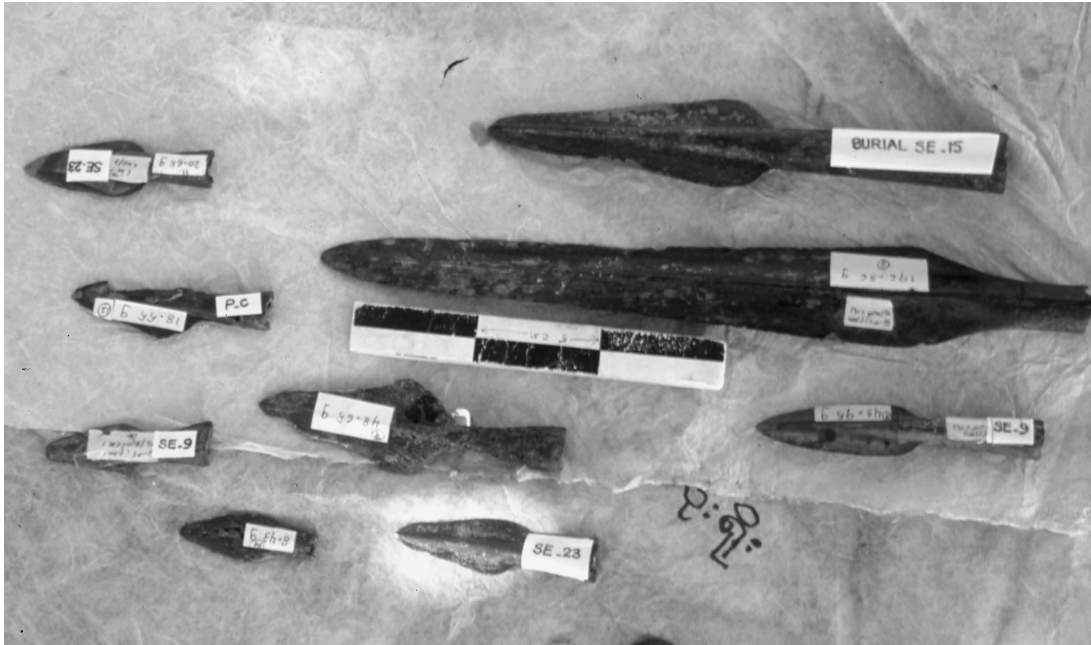
mortuary objects excavated are representative of all the items which were buried, and that the graves were not previously looted.

AMS dates from bones of pigs and cattle buried in the Ban Chiang Bronze Age graves showed that the Ban Chiang Bronze Age was contemporaneous with that of Ban Non Wat, and hence dated to the first, not second, millennium BCE. The AMS dates of the ceramic temper were problematic as tempers can be quite unreliable because of possible inclusion of old carbon in the clay matrix or contamination during the firing process.<sup>146</sup>

Scholars examining the Metal Age in Seasia propose two sources of external origin: the late third millennium BCE Eurasian forest-steppe,<sup>147</sup> and second millennium BCE bronze metallurgy in China's Erlitou or Erligang.<sup>148</sup> The first is predicated on an earlier beginning of the Bronze Age in 2000 BCE, while the second is a generally more acceptable 1000 BCE. No scholar has proposed an independent Seasian development of metallurgy since Solheim. White and Hamilton propose a long migration of metallurgists into Seasia bringing metal-working knowledge and technology, whereas Higham, Ciarla, and others prefer the explanation that technology transfer was mediated by contact and exchange. Much still remains to be learned regarding the means via which the technology was adapted or modified (localized), whether the technology utilized at different Metal Age sites throughout Seasia is similar, and if they differ, why this is so. Myanmar might have been a node along which "linear furnace technology" spread from Sri Lanka to Cambodia, Sarawak, and Japan.<sup>149</sup> Lead isotope studies of Myanmar data can test the hypothesis that Seasian metallurgy was derived from a northern origin, possibly China.<sup>150</sup>

The transition from late Bronze Age to early Iron Age in mainland Seasia occurred in the second half of the fifth century BCE. Mortuary items at Noen U-Loke reflected the high status of leading individuals in their communities, who were interred in rice-filled graves, wore gold and silver jewelry with fine bronzes, glass and stone beads, iron spears, knives, and even a spade. One male wore 150 bronze bangles and three bronze bells.<sup>151</sup> The study of late Bronze and early Iron Age burial sites in the Samon valley of central Myanmar also reveals great wealth among the individuals interred there.<sup>152</sup> The presence of glass and stone beads in the burials suggests that these sites were already part of some exchange network which linked Seasia and India. It is possible that knowledge of iron smelting and forging might have more than one source of origin, including transfer via Indian trade.<sup>153</sup>

The Iron Age also witnessed the increasing production of weapons of war: at Noen U-Loke, for instance, Higham found remains of a young man whose spine had been severed by an arrowhead (Figure 3.7). Higham suggests that Iron Age leaders made a leap to the status of regional princes. Competition "over people and valued imports such as gold, silver and bronze, investment in authority to create and maintain water control measures and control over the production and deployment of salt" between what he called "aggrandizers" may have formed the basis for increasing socioeconomic and political complexity, setting the stage for the emergence of "states" in Seasia.<sup>154</sup> Whether the competition for resources and attempts to monopolize access to various resources in Iron Age Seasia might have stimulated "state formation" has only begun to be examined. This idea is premised on the band/tribe/chiefdom/state stadial theory, which in ancient Seasia should not be assumed to have existed, at least in the form posited for other parts of the world.



**Figure 3.7** Spear points, Nyaunggan site, Chindwin Valley, North Central Myanmar

### **DONGSON CULTURE: 500 BCE TO 200 CE**

The term “Dongson” refers to an archaeological site in North Vietnam as well as an archaeological culture associated with bronze and iron artifacts, including drums, axes, and other ornate artifacts. Although Dongson was an Iron Age site, it produced an abundance of bronze objects compared with relatively few iron objects. The Dongson site is located in the Red River plain, Bac Bo region, and overlaps with the period of Vietnamese history associated with the legendary Hung kings, ancestors of the Kinh or Vietnamese, and the important site of Co Loa. There are more than 100 recorded Dongson sites, many of which contained rich burials with boat-shaped coffins, accompanied by close to 100 funerary items. These rich burials attest to the presence of a wealthy elite group in Dongson society, whose status may well have been hereditary. Burials and artistic depictions on Dongson drums suggest that Dongson society was hierarchical.

The art of Dongson first became known through the work of Louis Pajot in the 1920s and systematic excavations undertaken by Olav Janse in the 1930s<sup>155</sup> which revealed a rich cemetery containing bronze and iron artifacts, pottery, and semi-precious stones in addition to Chinese imports.<sup>156</sup> In the 1960s, Vietnamese archaeologists resumed excavations at the site, which they dated to around 1000 BCE, coinciding with the Go Mun phase.

In north Vietnamese archaeology, the Phung Nguyen Neolithic Age (circa 1600–1200 BCE) is followed by a Metal Age, which consists of two phases: Dong Dau (circa 1400–1000 BCE) and Go Mun (circa 1000–600 BCE).<sup>157</sup> Dating of these periods is still uncertain, even though 14 radiocarbon determinations

are available from Thanh Den and nine from Dong Dau. The results are problematic because of the unknown inbuilt age of the samples.<sup>158</sup> There is considerable overlap between Dong Dau and Dongson; Dong Dau axes assumed their pediform shape from later Dongson. Dong Dau artifacts also reflected influence from the Phung Nguyen archaeological culture, such as nephrite bangles and rings.

Phung Nguyen was named after a site in the Bac Bo plain where early agricultural settlements emerged around the first half of the second millennium BCE.<sup>159</sup> Axe moulds excavated from Dong Dau show that bronze was produced locally. The Dongson period began in the seventh century BCE and ended in the second century CE.<sup>160</sup> Vietnamese researchers have used similarities in decorative motifs from Phung Nguyen pottery and Dongson bronzes to demonstrate cultural continuity between the prehistoric communities of the Red River delta.

Many Dongson period cemeteries have been found, but many were located in areas with acidic soils, so few human remains survived. No complete human remains were found at Dongson, where researchers identified grave sites based on the deposition of artifacts rather than skeletal remains. At Lang Ca, 314 burials were found, but no human remains. Wooden coffins, some shaped like boats, were a feature of Dongson funerals. Other attributes include a wide repertoire of bronze implements, such as axes, daggers, situlae, spearheads, swords, paring knives, bells, bracelets, sickles, spittoons, plowshares, digging implements, and kettledrums. Aside from bronze, other artifacts include spindle whorls and pottery, and organic items such as wooden trays, gourd ladles, woven fabric, and cordage.<sup>161</sup> Objects of Chinese origin include coins minted between 9 and 23 CE at Xuan La, and Chinese seals, coins, mirrors, and halberds found in Dongson.<sup>162</sup>

The most notable Dongson artifact type is the bronze drum. Most archaeologists assume that the drums are correlated with the rise of chiefdoms in both north Vietnam and the Lingnan region (southern China, including the Pearl River region) in the last few centuries BCE. The drums were distributed over a large area from Lingnan to eastern Indonesia. There are two main concentrations of these drums: the Red River delta region and Lake Dian in Yunnan.

The Dongson period also marked an increase in strife with China. The fame of these drums was recorded in Chinese history. The *History of the Sui Dynasty* (587–617) contains a reference to bronze drums beaten by chiefs to summon their warriors to battle. A Tang dynasty (618–906) source states that “southern barbarians beat their drums when mourning, and during feasts.”<sup>163</sup> The drums provide much information through their decorations. The tympanum typically is decorated with images of armed individuals wearing plumed headdresses who may represent a warrior class, and friezes of flying birds and natural or geometric motifs. Moulded motifs made separately and attached to the drums comprise deer, lizards, fish, and frogs.

One of the greatest Dongson drums was found at Ngoc Lu in 1893. The tympanum has a star or sunburst motif in the center surrounded by three concentric round panels containing scenes which exhibit great artistry, but also provided interesting glimpses of everyday life and ritual. The scenes depict houses on piles, attached granaries, large boats with archers, water buffalos ploughing in rice fields, farmers pounding grain in mortars, etc. One panel illustrates a raised platform on which three seated drummers strike three drums of three different sizes, in front of which a group of musicians march in procession, led by four warriors wearing feathered headdresses. The leading warrior appears to hold



a spear.<sup>164</sup> A drum from Hoang Ha is almost identical except for the replacement of deer and birds by spiral motifs.

These drums were made by the lost wax technique. A clay core was made, then clay moulds which would contain the decorations on the mantle and tympanum. While the clay was wet, patterns were impressed on the clay moulds and further intricate motifs were added by a stylus. Hot wax was then poured into the pattern moulds; once the wax had dried, these were stuck onto the clay core. A very fine layer of clay was then applied over the wax so that the entire wax mould of the drum was encased in clay heavily tempered with rice which allowed the clay to withstand thermal shock when molten bronze was added. The mould was gradually heated to prevent the clay casing from breaking when molten bronze was added, as well as to melt the wax inside the clay mould. Molten bronze was then added to the hollow mould.<sup>165</sup> Once the bronze cooled, the mould was broken to reveal the newly cast drum. In some cases, a bivalve mould was used which would be taken apart to reveal the drum.

The art historian Heger classified the original Dongson drum as Type I. Derivative kettledrums produced in later periods in other places were characterized as Heger Types II to IV. Heger Type III drums were first produced around the eighth century CE and continued to be made by the Karen of the Shan Plateau until the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>166</sup> Heger II drums showed a preference for frog decoration on the tympanum and were produced in southern China, northern Laos, and central Vietnam. Heger IV drums are more recent products cast in southern China with simplified forms and decoration.

### **DONGSON DRUM DISTRIBUTION AS AN INDICATOR OF A SPHERE OF ARTISTIC INTERACTION**

The distribution of Dongson bronze drums can be used to map an interaction sphere. A large number of Dongson Heger Type I drums has been found in peninsular Malaysia, Sumatra, Java, Bali, and eastern Indonesia. Six have been discovered in peninsular Malaysia; those from Klang and Tembeling were buried in the second century BCE. Two more were found in Kampong Sungei Lang in Selangor, and another pair in Kuala Trengganu.<sup>167</sup> No remains of other activity such as settlements were found at any of these places (Figure 3.8).

Approximately 61 drums have been found in the Indonesian archipelago, from Sumatra to Java, southern Maluku, and the Bird's Head of West New Guinea.<sup>168</sup> Some of them bear unusual decorations. The Makalamau drum from Sangeang Island near Sumbawa portrays humans in costumes which may represent Han dynasty, Kushan, or Satavahana costumes; the Kai drum frieze depicts deer and tiger-hunting; the drum from Salayar, southwest Sulawesi, shows elephants and peacocks.<sup>169</sup>

In addition to drums, other bronze objects either imported from north Vietnam or locally made imitations of them have been found in the islands. On the island of Java these included a male statuette found in highland West Java near Bogor which may have functioned as the dagger handle; a miniature Heger I drum from Cibadak, western Java; and a lidded bronze vessel from Lamongan in east Java.<sup>170</sup> A large number of heart-shaped socketed axes was found in a Balinese sarcophagus. Socketed bronze axes bearing incised decoration in typical Dongson fashion appeared in various places. Stone



**Figure 3.8** Dongson drum, Chaiya, South Thailand

and terracotta valves possibly for moulds used in bronze casting were found in Java, Sabah, and the Talaud Islands.

Javanese and Balinese made drums inspired by Dongson style, but with long, thin proportions in contrast to the squat shape of the Dongson originals. The best-known of these is still kept in a special drum tower in a temple in Pejeng, Bali. Local production of these drums is proven by the discovery of a stamp for impressing the wax mould of a similar drum, and clay moulds in Bali.<sup>171</sup> In a burial discovered in Keradenanrejo, Lamongan, east Java, a child was placed inside a Pejeng-style drum beneath a Heger Type I drum. The child was buried with carnelian, glass, and faceted gold beads, a bronze container bearing Dongson designs, gold ornaments, bronze cups, and several other iron and bronze artifacts.<sup>172</sup>

Another special derivative type of Dongson drum consists of bronze drums called *moko* which were produced in eastern Nusa Tenggara, where they were used to purchase brides. This localized version is very slender and small compared with the Heger Type I but its proportions resemble the Pejeng-style drums of Bali and Java. The distribution of the Heger Type I and related drums in the archipelago seems to trace a route to the sources of spices in the Maluku region. The local variants of the Dongson style attest to the fluidity of the exchange of cultural ideas, artistic styles, technological knowledge, and technology.

A related interaction sphere extended from northern Vietnam to neighbouring regions of southern China and Yunnan. People of the Dian culture also utilized the drums for burials, but they added three-dimensional sculptures on top of the tympana depicting scenes including warfare, sacrifice, women



weaving, and houses. The drums were sometimes used as containers for cowries, a medium of exchange which was popular in Yunnan until it was forcibly suppressed by the Chinese during the Postclassic.

The first millennium BCE characterizes a period of interregional contact and exchange between Dongson communities and stratified societies of neighbouring regions, including contemporaries such as Dian in Yunnan, central Vietnam, and upland societies in parts of Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. The extensive web of interactions between these various regions contributed to a process of reciprocal complexity which is unrecorded in written sources, but was clearly important when the historic period began.<sup>173</sup>

While the Dongson interaction sphere flourished, China achieved high proficiency in iron technology, employing the sophisticated and demanding technique of iron-casting, instead of iron-forging, which was employed by Seasians. Iron-casting never spread to Seasia. The presence of bimetallic (bronze-iron) objects in Vietnam around 300 BCE suggests that Seasians were interested in iron, but not to the extent that it threatened the use of bronze artifacts in ritual and war. A small number of bimetallic items has been found in Vietnam and Thailand. In Vietnam these include a spearhead from Cuong Ha in Quang Binh Province, and a socketed axe from Go Ma Voi in Quang Nam Province. Locally made iron objects produced at the same period as Dongson bronzes include swords, axes, hoes, sickles, knives, and tweezers.<sup>174</sup> Other Chinese artifacts found in situ in burials reflected increasing contact between the two areas.

## CO LOA

Co Loa might have been the first political center or capital of proto-Vietnamese civilization.<sup>175</sup> The site has a long sequence of occupation from Phung Nguyen to Dong Dau, Go Mun, and Dongson. This demonstrates increasing social complexity in one site,<sup>176</sup> but also continuity in terms of the occupation of sites from prehistory through protohistory in Vietnam. Dongson-period sherds were found, and a Dongson drum weighing 72 kilograms was excavated outside the southeast corner of the site; other bronze objects found include ploughshares, hoes, chisels, axes, spearheads, daggers, and arrowheads amounting to 200 items in total.<sup>177</sup> In the late Dongson period Co Loa came under the administration of Nan Yue. This heralded the next period in Vietnamese protohistory: Sinification of north Vietnam.

Excavations in 2004 and 2005 revealed kilns, bricks, stylized ceramic roof tiles, and stone moulds for casting bronze arrowheads, indicating that bronzes were produced locally. Co Loa artifacts may be correlated with the presence of an elite which controlled indigenous resources and centralized production of objects,<sup>178</sup> such as bronzes, a sizable proportion of which comprised weapons indicative of increasing conflict in the region and perhaps between Co Loa and the Chinese. The ramparts and enclosures of Co Loa may have been built during the turmoil in China during the Warring States period.<sup>179</sup> The stamped earth technique or *hang-tu* method associated with ancient China may have been used in Co Loa, but studies of the defensive works are still in a preliminary stage.

Co Loa was established in a region comprising numerous competing polities during the mid-first millennium BCE when elites were employing different strategies to accumulate wealth, monopolize access to resources, and gain political power. These are some of the major transformations associated with the transition from the late Iron Age to the protohistoric period.<sup>180</sup>

**Figure 3.9** Moated and ramparted sites of mainland Southeast Asia

## MOATS, RAMPARTS, MOUNDS, AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS OF MAINLAND SEASIA

Urbanization is often equated with elaborate structures such as walled cities, which in the past were thought to have been introduced to Seasia from India or China. Recent archaeological research has proven that permanent settlements began to be established more than 4,000 years ago in a wide swath of Seasia, from Myanmar to Vietnam. Some were enclosed within elaborate complexes of earthen ramparts and depressions (trenches or ditches often called “moats” by analogy with defensive water barriers around medieval European castles; it is unlikely that they were planned to fulfill this function more than 4,000 years ago). This is one of the most important discoveries which have altered the interpretation of the origins of Classic Southeast Asian culture. Most of these structures are found on mainland Seasia, supporting the idea that the mainland and the insular realms have evolved along different trajectories (Figure 3.9).

These sites were built over a period of 3,000 years. They were not a single tradition; they evolved in response to local factors in four different areas (Myanmar, central Thailand, northeast Thailand, and eastern Cambodia/western Vietnam). In some cases environmental adaptation may have been responsible for their development and distribution pattern; in others, human factors including warfare and ideology may have provided the main motivation for their construction. Recent research suggests that features interpreted as ramparts and moats at some sites in northeastern and central Thailand are natural features. This discovery removes some evidence for large-scale communal activity in late prehistory.

### THE OLDEST RAMPARTED AND MOATED SITES: THE *BANTEAY KOU* OF CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM

In 1930 French scholars called attention to circular sites in rubber plantations in the “red soil” region of southwest Vietnam and eastern Cambodia, associated with stone tools and lithophones (musical instruments). In 1959 Louis Malleret noted that “circular earthworks in south Indochina” seemed to form groups: an eastern group with three sites, a group of nine sites in the Hon-quan rubber plantation, the Krek group with three sites, the Mimot group with two sites, and the Peam Cheang plantation with one site. He noted Williams-Hunt’s preliminary research on the subject, and contrasted those in the red soil region with rectangular sites in the Angkor area and the Vientiane region of Laos.<sup>181</sup> B.P. Groslier examined them from the air and chose to excavate a centrally located site at Mimot (now spelled Memot), Cambodia, measuring 200 meters in diameter, including the rampart. He discovered a rich concentration of artifacts (1,000 stone tools and 20,000 sherds) 3 meters thick with 14 levels of occupation, which he assigned to the Neolithic, 1500 to 500 BCE.<sup>182</sup> These sites do not seem to have had any connection with superficially similar sites in northeast Thailand.<sup>183</sup> These are older than moated and ramparted sites in northeast Thailand, which begin to appear around 500 BCE.

The lower Mekong as far upstream as the Tonle Sap may have been affected by saline seawater until 4000 BP;<sup>184</sup> this may have had something to do with the formation of this type of settlement, which

seems to have begun around that date. Four *banteay kou* have been dated: Phoum Trameng (2290–2030 BCE); Banteay Meas (1930–1730 BCE; 1720–1690 BCE); Phoum Chong (1620–1260 BCE); and Chi Peang (bottom 1040–840 BCE, middle 410–360 BCE, and upper level 290–250 BCE).<sup>185</sup> The sites may have been occupied for long periods of 400 to 700 years.<sup>186</sup>

The term “Memotian” culture is now used to refer to 40 circular ramparted and moated sites (*banteay kou* in Khmer) in a hilly area of east Cambodia and a corner of southwest Vietnam measuring 85 kilometers east-west and 35 kilometers north-south, occupied between the early third millennium to early first millennium BCE; about 15 have been intensively studied. The oldest sites seem to cluster in the west of this area, from whence they spread gradually east. Their components include an outer rampart, interior depression or “moat”, and a gap in the rampart, probably an entrance/exit. Their average size is five hectares, including the rampart, 2.4 hectares internally;<sup>187</sup> there is little variation in size or evidence that a hierarchy of sites developed. These sites are much smaller than contemporary sites in northeast Thailand at the same period; Ban Chiang Hian, Non Chai, and Noen U-Loke are 18 to 50 hectares.<sup>188</sup> Kamplong in Kandal, Cambodia, is 40 to 60 hectares. They share a homogenous material culture, much of which consists of rice-tempered pottery and stone tools for woodworking. Artifacts are not very dense, suggesting that the number of inhabitants was not large, perhaps around 100 to 200.

Some clusters of sites are visible: the Krek rubber plantation (four sites; this is the westernmost group, 60 kilometers east of the Mekong), the Chlong and Chalang rubber plantations (seven sites), and the Memot area (three sites). The builders chose specific locations in order to obtain access to a wide range of resources. The inhabitants probably practiced shifting cultivation, horticulture, and hunting. All are on or near the tops of hills 30 to 90 meters above the floodplain, near permanent water sources, on red clay soils near alluvial sediments. This suggests that the sites were chosen by people who utilized diverse means of subsistence in addition to rice. One mysterious attribute of all the sites is that no burials or ceremonial objects have been found in them, nor has any evidence of trade with other groups. No faunal remains (bones) or other organic material are found on *banteay kou*, nor any metal; this may be due to the highly acid soil of this area.

Artifacts are more common in sites outside plantations; probably many were scraped off sites in the plantations by landscaping. None are found under or outside the ramparts; thus the ramparts were built when the sites were first occupied.<sup>189</sup> Most artifacts are found on the inner edges of the moats. The second densest artifact concentrations are found in the centers of the platforms. The function(s) of the ramparts are not known, though it is speculated that they were meant for defense. Very few artifacts are found outside the ramparts. Depressions inside the ramparts do not have inlets, and there is no evidence that they stored water.<sup>190</sup> Some soil used for the ramparts was taken from the surface of the interior platform. Thus the ramparts were not simply spoil heaps for the ditches/moats; height was important.<sup>191</sup> The ramparts normally are 4 meters higher than the bottoms of the inner depressions (“moats”), 2 to 2.5 meters above platform surfaces, and 1.5 to 2 meters above the exterior ground level. Ramparts always encircle the sites (except in one case, where they only surround 50 per cent of the site).

Habitation layers vary in thickness from 50 to 130 centimeters. Three-quarters of the artifacts are ceramics; the rest are stone tools. Ceramics display many rim types, suggesting a range of functions,

but decoration and rim styles show no change over time. They resemble ceramics in Laang Spean (3000 BCE–900 CE), Samrong Sen (2000–1200 BCE), Ban Chiang (2200–1000 BC), and Non Nok Tha (2700–2000 BCE).<sup>192</sup> The only non-utilitarian ceramics are clay beads and bangles. Anvils indicate that the ceramics were produced by the paddle and anvil method. One spindle whorl indicates that fibers were spun.

The majority of stones consists of quadrangular adzes, many of which had been broken during use, cores, and flakes. A wide range of other tools is also represented, including shouldered axes, arrowheads (rare), chisels, knives, small balls, whetstones, and grinding stones. Four lithophones were recovered as surface finds on several earthworks, as were four bangles. The fact that many of the stone tools were flakes and chisels suggests that the working of wood and bone were major activities. The Krek site yielded artifacts from all stages of stone tool-making, use, and discard.

The main conclusions are that these sites were permanent (not seasonal) habitation sites used by all members of the group (not just the elite). Settlement sites begin to appear in nearby floodplains around 500 BCE; the construction of ramparted sites halted at the same time.<sup>193</sup> However, it is not certain that the highlanders moved to the lowlands; lowland ceramics are different from those on the hills. More than 50 modern circular villages in Ratanakiri Province, northeast Cambodia, bear a strong resemblance to the *banteay kou*. The modern inhabitants of those sites are mostly shifting cultivators, suggesting a correlation between this form of subsistence and round habitation sites.<sup>194</sup>

## MOATS AND RAMPARTS IN THE ANGKOR AREA

Ground surveys based on aerial photography north of Angkor identified 68 probable settlement mounds. At one of these, Phum Reul, 10 kilometers northwest of Angkor, stone tools were in the possession of villagers. The area west of Angkor near the Puok River yielded the largest concentration of such sites. Stone tools have been recorded in the monument zone at Angkor, for instance, at Baksei Chamkrong, just outside the south gate to Angkor Thom.<sup>195</sup>

Malleret had a trench dug at Lovea, 6 kilometers northwest of Angkor, and reportedly found human skeletal material on an irregularly shaped mound surrounded by a rampart and moat in association with bronze and iron objects. The central mound covers about 6 hectares and is ramparted and encircled by depressions (“moats”) which are 50 to 70 meters wide. There are at least 11 similar sites in the Lovea vicinity. In 2011 and 2012, new excavations there<sup>196</sup> revealed graves with offerings such as carnelian fragments, glass beads, bronze and iron objects, and ceramics. These lay beneath an upper layer containing a large quantity of Chinese porcelain from the Angkor period. Directly south of the site is a rectangular feature, probably an Angkorian period *baray*. An important item found here but not so far reported from the moated, ramparted sites on the north side of the Dangrek is an early Chinese coin. Such coins have, however, been found in burials in south Vietnam from the Protohistoric.<sup>197</sup> Radiocarbon dates place the Lovea burials in the Protohistoric. Ko Ta Meas, another circular site in the Angkor area, has yielded a date of 2870 BP, placing it in the early Prehistoric.<sup>198</sup>

## KHORAT

The existence of similar moated/ramparted sites on the Khorat Plateau of northeast Thailand was noted in the early twentieth century. In the 1950s, archaeologists began to use aerial photography to study them systematically.<sup>199</sup> There is reason to associate some of the sites with the Protoclassic and Early Classic culture of Cambodia. Inscriptions and historical accounts indicate that the majority of the population of this region since the beginning of the Classic has spoken Khmer.<sup>200</sup> More than 100 temples similar to those found in Cambodia have been discovered in the Mun basin of Khorat, which seems to have constituted an independent kingdom or kingdoms in the Early Classic. By the seventh century Sanskrit was known in the region. A Sanskrit inscription found at Muang Sema refers to a kingdom called Sri Chanasa where the ruler made donations to Buddhism.

The moats and ramparts at Khorat are not as old as the oldest of the *banteay kou*. They may have been built for different reasons, yet it is difficult to escape the conclusion that they were somehow related, since the custom of building moated, ramparted sites never appeared in insular Seasia. The Khorat tradition of building enclosed sites probably evolved through several phases, unlike the *banteay kou*, which seem to have remained the same for 2,000 years. In the first phase, Khorat sites were irregularly shaped habitation mounds without moats. Sites of this type were rather small, but it is difficult to reconstruct their original dimensions. In the late Preclassic, ramparts and channels appear around some mounds. Several hundred such sites have been identified on aerial photographs, mainly in the Mun basin near Cambodia, though some are found farther north in the Chi basin. It is possible that the mounds of Khorat represented a new form of settlement which evolved in the late Preclassic and persisted into the Protoclassic. In the Protoclassic and Early Classic, sites on the plateau had rectangular ramparts and moats oriented to the compass directions, and were much larger.<sup>201</sup>

We now believe that humans settled in the Mun valley of southern Khorat approximately 4,000 years ago. Neolithic settlements left traces at Ban Non Wat and Ban Lum Khao, where Neolithic pottery similar to types found in central Thailand has been recovered. The Bronze Age began around 10,000 BCE. The Iron Age began around 500 BCE.<sup>202</sup> The archaeology of the upper Mun valley has been divided into six phases: 1000 to 600 BCE, 600 to 200 BCE, 200 BCE to 300 CE, 300 to 600, 600 to 1000, and 1000 to 1300.<sup>203</sup> In the first phase, corresponding to the early Preclassic, settlements were rare and found in the alluvial plain.

A study of the distribution of moated, ramparted sites in the Mun and Chi river valleys in the late 1970s under the supervision of C.F.W. Higham and A. Kijngam is perhaps the most comprehensive subregional site survey yet conducted in Southeast Asia. Their reports serve as models for the presentation of data urgently needed for many more parts of the region. The survey team used aerial photos and ground survey techniques, including interviews with villagers, and found “strong archaeological and historic grounds for concluding that the hierarchic settlement pattern in the Mun and Chi valleys reflects state formation”; their criterion for the settlement pattern of a state was a two-tier hierarchy.<sup>204</sup> The conclusion that state formation occurred here has been disputed by others. Another Thai archaeologist argued that a two-tier system is better correlated with a chiefdom, but believes that a three-tier system



more representative of a state level of organization may in fact have existed, if two large sites, Muang Fa Daed and Ban Chiang Hian, are included.<sup>205</sup>

This difference of opinion is largely semantic. No concrete correlation between site sizes and socio-political complexity in Southeast Asia has yet been proven, and some have explicitly argued that no such association exists. Unless that assumption can be proven, it is best to avoid the use of the term “state formation”; we should confine ourselves to noting that there was a change from a two-tier to a three-tier settlement hierarchy in the south Mekong in the Preclassic and Protoclassic. A three-tier hierarchy did not emerge in the Chi Valley (and by extension in northeast Thailand) until the Early Classic, when there is evidence for population growth, intensified rice-growing, restrictions on access to prestige goods, and warfare.

Kijngam and Higham distinguished between “ordinary sites” and “major sites”, which were at least 10 times larger than the mean size of “ordinary sites”. Their survey located 60 archaeological sites surrounded by moats, with areas ranging from 3 to 171 hectares. This system of differentiating tiers of the settlement hierarchy by a factor of 10 is not the only option. An alternative procedure could identify four tiers of sites: small (1–8 hectares), medium (13–21 hectares), large (28), and very large (over 30). The most objective way of defining the boundaries between tiers of settlement hierarchy requires large-scale excavation to examine the assumption that density of occupation within sites and duration of their occupation is correlated with size and differences in social organization of the sites’ inhabitants.

Another source of uncertainty in interpreting this data is the lack of control over the dates of the sites. The authors assumed that all sites were occupied between 1000 BCE and 1000 CE. This study was an excellent step toward the development of a subregional research strategy, but unfortunately the next step, that of turning this assumption into a testable hypothesis, has not been undertaken. Excavation may show that only a portion of the sites was occupied at any one time. The tendency to conflate sites occupied serially rather than simultaneously is a common problem in archaeology.<sup>206</sup>

Kijngam et al. found that the settlement hierarchy on the Khorat Plateau formed a strongly primate pattern, in which one settlement was much bigger than all others. Some experts assert that primate patterns are the inevitable first stage in the evolution of a multi-tiered settlement pattern, when transport systems are not yet well developed.<sup>207</sup> In Mesopotamia a primate hierarchy formed in the early stage of urbanization in southern Sumeria, but a regular (log-normal) distribution appeared in the north. Thus several possible distributions of settlement sizes may appear at the same stage of settlement pattern formation.<sup>208</sup> A graph of settlement hierarchy therefore cannot be used as a guide to the stage of development of an urban system. Northeast Thailand’s primate distribution may have been due to cultural factors such as cosmological concepts rather than state formation. Modern Thailand, a developed nation, is characterized by a strongly primate settlement hierarchy.

Food storage facilities have been identified as a necessary pre-adaptation for settled life.<sup>209</sup> Food storage facilities may have developed early in northeast Thailand because of the long dry season experienced there.<sup>210</sup> If this hypothesis is true, then areas in the equatorial zone which do not have long dry seasons would be less likely to build storage facilities, and the formation of villages would offer fewer advantages there. Different sequences and rates of innovation in settlement patterns should appear in

regions with and without seasonal climates. Seasonality may be correlated with differences between north and south Southeast Asia. “Human settlement based on intensive agriculture is still mostly confined to areas of greater seasonality.”<sup>211</sup>

Ethnographic studies support the hypothesis that seasonality is a determinant factor in the adoption of a sedentary way of life. In tropical Southeast Asia (north of 5° north and south of 5° south) ethnographically known hunter-gatherer bands circulated through specific ranges, camping repeatedly at the same sites, and forming macro-bands at certain times of the year. In tropical areas such as the Andaman Islands, the greater the access to aquatic resources, the longer the period of residence at specific sites. No such pattern seems to have evolved in the equatorial zone. The Kubu of Sumatra who inhabit the equatorial region form no groups larger than three to five huts; this pattern may be connected with “lack of seasonality in the Sumatran climate”.<sup>212</sup> The correlation between seasonality and subsistence suggests that settlement hierarchies would emerge at different times and for different reasons in the equatorial region of Southeast Asia compared with the tropical zone. This may explain why no moated and ramparted sites developed in insular Southeast Asia.

Moated sites are also known from the central plain of Thailand. The first examples may have been built in the uplands at the west edge of the plain. Older sites (mainly from the Preclassic) normally follow the local topography rather than a predetermined shape, suggesting that one of the moats’ main functions in this period was to collect water.<sup>213</sup> Similar sites date from the Protoclassic and Early Classic, but they seem to have been designed to enclose territory, possibly as a defensive measure. They often are rectangular rather than rounded.

Surveys began in the Mun basin in 1900, and the first excavations took place in 1957. Elizabeth Moore’s study of the moated sites of Thailand<sup>214</sup> focused on four districts on the south side of the 673-kilometer-long basin, where less research has been done than along the Chi, the other tributary of the Mekong which flows across Khorat. All the moated sites in her study lie in what are now rice-growing areas. Moore used the Williams-Hunt Collection of aerial photographs taken of many areas of mainland Seasia between 1942 and 1952. The collection is important because many of the sites visible on the photographs no longer exist or have been significantly disturbed.

Williams-Hunt interpreted the ramparts and moats as defensive structures, and thought that the four largest sites were “metropolises”.<sup>215</sup> He had no information about the age of these features. Moore estimated that moated settlements began to be built in the southern Mun by 1000 BCE, though the oldest dated examples were constructed around 500 BCE. Of 970 sites identified from aerial photos, 149 had moats, 572 had mounds but no moats, and 249 had earthworks and “water courses”. Some sites have two or three pottery phases.

Kijngam, Higham, and Wiriayaromp’s survey located 64 sites in the Chi of which only one, Ban Chiang Hian, was moated. It was also the largest (38.7 hectares). It was occupied from approximately 1300 BCE to 500 CE. Cultural deposits there were 6 meters deep. More than 92 circular sites have been listed in the Mun and Chi valleys and more than 93 in the Phimai region.<sup>216</sup>

The largest sites (averaging 33.2 hectares) are found on the lower terraces. Those on the high terraces were smallest (11.7 hectares), while those on the floodplains were medium-sized (16.5 hectares). Moore concludes that the settlers were growing wet rice; White and Pigott think that they were

“community-based production organizations”. There is no evidence of any site hierarchy in the Mun area, nor is there any indication that trade routes or any other outside contact played any role in influencing the pattern of distribution of the sites. This conclusion is, however, only based on the study of enclosed sites; the inclusion of open sites might yield a different result, but it would be an enormous task to collect such data.

In the floodplains, some mounds have no moats or walls; others have single moats, triple moats, or a combination of moats and ramparts. In the low terraces, all sites had ramparts and moats. In some instances, the site had originally consisted of mounds without moats; in others, the complex of ramparts and moats was built on previously unoccupied land. The habitation area inside the moated sites in the Phimai/Mun-Chi basin varied from 0.5 to 35 hectares.<sup>217</sup> They are no larger on average than normal habitation sites, unlike the Dvaravati period in central Thailand, where moated sites represented 10 of the 11 largest settlement sites.<sup>218</sup>

In the earliest phase, from about 1000 to 500 BCE, most sites were located in the Phimai area. Most later sites are farther south. The period from 600 to 200 BCE was a transitional period associated with iron, the water buffalo, chaff-tempered pottery, and glass beads (imported from India). Locational analysis indicates that ecological factors had the greatest effect on the distribution and formation of moated sites: preferred locations for them were along tributaries, not the main stream, and on the floodplain. In most of the sites, the moats were fed with water from nearby streams. In the dry season now, the moats still hold a minimum depth of 2 meters of water, which Moore estimated could irrigate 4.6 hectares of land, producing enough rice for 34 adults. Some sites had two or three moats. Rank-size analysis of the moated sites yields a normal distribution (no evidence of primacy), suggesting that there was no large-scale political system in the area. The majority of the moated sites was probably constructed during this period. Welch found a preference for building sites in the uplands rather than in lowlands, and detected a tendency toward clustering, which he connected with the development of a hierarchy; Moore suggests that the clustering is because water resources are concentrated in some areas, not evenly distributed.

Moore found that some sites were moated on less than 50 per cent of their circumference. She found that some had natural moats; later geoarchaeology has confirmed this conclusion. Moore concluded that sites where more than 50 per cent of their central mound was enclosed were more advanced, thus more recent. At some sites, ramparts were added later, thus evolution did occur. She identified three phases of water management strategy in northeast Thailand. In Phase I, 1000 to 500 BCE, channels around villages followed the local topography. More channels were added over time, perhaps to increase the defensive perimeter and augment the aquatic food supply. In Phase I, most sites were in the Phimai area. In Phase II, channels surrounded a larger area than the occupation mound. In the final phase, moats were dug around temples and cities, to which were added reservoirs or baray, partly connected with ritual bathing.<sup>219</sup>

Dougald O'Reilly expanded Moore's 1988 list of 91 irregular moated sites to 227. Possible functions of the ramparts and moats in central Thailand proposed by various scholars have increased to encompass defense, flood control, aquaculture, symbolism, water storage for agriculture, or as livestock pens. The emergence of moated sites may be due to the benefits they provided to leaders: the moats may have been built as water storage devices to irrigate rice fields, resulting in surplus food

production which enabled leaders to gain prestige.<sup>220</sup> This explanation would provide a rationale for the absence of such sites in the insular area; they would not be needed because of the different climatic regimes, irregular topography, and soil types. The question then arises of the factors which favoured the formation of elites in both areas at the same time, before the moated/ramparted sites existed. Trade is one possible answer.

It is now generally acknowledged that political organization in the areas where moated and ramparted sites emerged in the Bronze Age, 1000 to 500 BCE, was heterarchical, meaning that each village or ramparted site was independent of all others.<sup>221</sup> No institution of institutionalized leadership (chiefs or kings) may have existed either. In the Bronze Age, prestige may have been earned by those who were able to acquire rare items used for personal adornment. In about 500 BCE, approximately contemporary with the introduction of iron, prestige based on ability to acquire exotic items through trade or long-distance travel may have shifted to prestige obtained through control of water. How precisely this may have happened is not clear. It is unlikely that individuals or even extended families could have dug the moats by themselves. Possibly enterprising individuals used imported luxury items as incentive for others to engage in cooperative labour. The value of water storage systems may have increased during the Iron Age because of climatic change (see further discussion).

Major sites of the late prehistoric and early Preclassic (Nong Nor, Khok Phanom Di, Ban Na Di, and Non Nok Tha) have yielded no evidence that social classes had yet emerged in Thailand. Burials contain a range of offerings, but there is no correlation of the quantity or quality of items with age or sex. No weapons have been found, indicating a lack of organized conflict which might have given prestige to warriors.

## SITES, CEMETERIES, AND ARTIFACTS

Four major Bronze Age cemeteries and a significant number of other prehistoric sites have been excavated on the Khorat Plateau. Two of the most famous early sites lie in the Sakon Nakhon basin drained by the Songkhram River, at the far northeast corner of Thailand. Another is in the Chi valley; the fourth is in the Mun basin.

*Non Nok Tha:* Chi River basin, excavated by Parker and Bayard in 1965, and by Bayard in 1968. A total of 217 graves were revealed on a mound covering 1.5 hectares. The original dates proposed for bronze here were very early;<sup>222</sup> the more likely date for initial occupation of Non Nok Tha is now thought to be in the mid-second millennium BCE.<sup>223</sup>

*Ban Na Di:* Sakon Nakhon basin, far northeast corner of Thailand, drained by the Songkhram River, excavated from 1980 to 1981 by Higham and Kijngam. Sixty burials were unearthed, with an unusual orientation: men were buried with heads to the south, women to the north. The site was probably occupied for a short time. It was necessary to use pooled charcoal to obtain a date of 1313 to 903 BCE; the latest graves contained iron. Graves in one part of the site are richer than in the other part, suggesting that social differentiation had begun to occur.<sup>224</sup> Life expectancy was short; only two people out of the 60 studied lived beyond the age of 50. The average age at death for men who survived adolescence was

29.5; women could expect to live to 38. Diet was not a major problem; they did not suffer from anemia, and women began to become pregnant by the age of 17.

*Ban Chiang*: Sakon Nakhon basin. The site was originally dated to 3500 BCE, with bronze, but the chronology has now been revised to around 1500 BCE.<sup>225</sup> The site is still of interest, in part because of its beautiful red on buff painted pottery, but the site's significance is now that of a representative site of its period rather than one of the oldest bronze-working sites in the world.

*Ban Lum Khao*: This site, an important source of data for the study of the transition to the Bronze Age in the Mun basin, was excavated by Higham and Thosarat from 1995 to 1996. Occupation is divided into three phases, the first of which took place between 1400 and 1000 BCE.<sup>226</sup> No organic material was found which could be used for dating, but comparison with similar artifacts at Noen U-Loke suggests that the last burials were deposited around 500 to 600 BCE. This makes the site approximately contemporary with Ban Na Di and Non Nok Tha, later than Khok Phanom Di. The burials yielded a rich range of artifacts: bronze casting moulds, animal figurines (common in Bronze Age sites in Thailand), worked bone; stone adzes; ceramic anvils (for making pottery); spindle whorls (for spinning thread); beads and bangles of stone, clay, shell, and bronze; one ceramic with a red painted motif on a buff background, like Ban Chiang ware; many globular vessels with trumpet necks; cord-marked bases; and red paint.<sup>227</sup> The distribution of artifacts does not suggest that society was yet marked by strong divisions.

*Ban Non Wat*: a moated site about 200 meters in diameter near Phimai in the southwestern part of Khorat in the Mun basin, 2.3 kilometers east of another important site, Noen U-Loke. Extensive excavations here revealed a long sequence of occupation starting in the Neolithic (mid-seventeenth century BCE), spanning the entire Bronze Age and surviving into the Iron Age; the last burials date to about 410 BCE.

The site was connected to a long-distance exchange system. Some cowry shells from the ocean were found in the Neolithic stratum, pierced for use as ornaments. Stone for adzes was also imported. A very large sample of burials (650) has been recovered, of which 224 are dated to the Bronze Age. Some burials in the center of the site had large quantities of offerings, but as a whole the cemetery yielded only hints of differential wealth and no evidence of warfare. The absence of status differences and warfare distinguishes this society from other Bronze Age societies around the world: There are no destruction layers indicative of battles, no fortifications, no wounds on the skeletons. Some Bronze Age burials in Thailand contain arrowheads, but they could have been used in hunting. Bimetallic spear points which were probably for weapons only appear in the Iron Age. There is evidence that many of the ramparted sites housed specialists in various occupations such as working metal, textiles, or pottery.

In the Iron Age, evidence of trade with India appears on Khorat. At Ban Non Wat, this appears in the form of carnelian and agate adornment, glass beads, earrings, and an unusual artifact possibly used as an ear plug.<sup>228</sup> Gold, which is another imported luxury item, was very rare in the Thai sites. At Ban Non Wat, there were only two gold objects: one bead and one earring.

Clay objects with incised lines on one surface are common on Dvaravati sites in Central Thailand; their discovery here indicates that the site was still occupied in the late first millennium CE, though burial was practiced.<sup>229</sup> Clay discs (here termed "counters"),<sup>230</sup> some with holes in the middle, found

here resemble artifacts found in tenth-century north Vietnam and fourteenth-century Java and Singapore. Their purpose has never been clarified. A large number (1,018) of items described as “conical rollers”<sup>231</sup> was found, but only 75 were in mortuary contexts, and may have constituted fill rather than offerings. They resemble objects found in fourteenth-century Singapore, although their surfaces seem to be grooved in spiral fashion whereas those found in Singapore are smooth.

*Ban Takhong:* Elizabeth Moore excavated three test pits here in 1989.<sup>232</sup> The central mound covers 6.4 hectares. One radiocarbon date of  $3540 \pm 90$  was obtained from a layer with bronze, which is probably misleading. Other dates range from 1500 to 2200 years BP. Ceramics included red burnished and painted ware, clay “counters” similar to those found in Sakon Nakhon.<sup>233</sup> Clay walls and floors were found, which Moore suggested might be remains of pottery kilns. A pottery anvil was also found. Similar clay walls and floors were found at Non Yang (see subsequent discussion). Four different mortuary systems were recognized, two of which have not yet been found anywhere else. In one of these, associated with the last phase of burials, large pots containing human bones were arranged in a row. In the other unique burial, a person was buried in a kneeling position with pottery including red burnished wares (found at early levels of other sites) and a glass “plug”, probably for an ear ornament. The deepest burial was laid to rest in a jar atop a turtle’s carapace. Two other burial systems, large urns and jars placed vertically mouth to mouth, are found at sites of the Dvaravati culture in northeast and central Thailand.

*Ban Krabuang Nok:* This 25.6-hectare moated site was excavated by Indrawooth in 1988.<sup>234</sup> Occupation began in the Iron Age: 300 BCE to 200 CE. The next phase dates from the Protoclassic and Early classic (200–900 CE). Some iron tools are similar to those found in the Chao Phraya Valley at this period, but the ceramic assemblages are quite different. During the site’s third period in the Middle Classic (900–1300), cremation replaced burial.

*Ban Prasat:* This site, 3 kilometers from Ban Lum Khao, was excavated by the Fine Arts Department of Thailand in 1991. Sixty-six burials were unearthed. The earliest occupation dates from the Bronze Age, 800 to 1000 BCE. The upper layer contained Iron Age burials, all with a type of pottery termed “Phimai” black ware. Bowls of this type containing human remains were placed rim to rim. Evidence of trade connections was present in the form of carnelian, agate, and glass beads in the upper layers. Some pottery identified as Dvaravati period was also found.<sup>235</sup>

*Noen U-Loke:* Noen U-Loke, including its ramparts, covers 36 hectares. Its central mound is 5 meters high. An earlier excavation by Wichakana may have found Bronze Age artifacts. Charles Higham and his team obtained 17 radiocarbon dates from the site; however, the only charcoal sample for which the species could be determined was 100 to 200 years younger than the other dates from the same layer.<sup>236</sup> This date for a known species was obtained from rice, which would probably have been deposited in the soil quite soon after it was harvested. The other dates may be too old if the wood was taken from old trees. If the oldest date for the site is thrown out, Noen U-Loke was first occupied around 600 BCE, which is late Bronze Age, and abandoned around 400 CE, after a thousand-year period during which it was intermittently occupied and abandoned.

Activities attested for the site include burials, some in ceramic vessels, iron and bronze working, and possible making of glass beads. The discovery of carnelian beads and agate jewellery suggests that it



is more likely that the inhabitants of the site obtained these items, including glass beads, through trade networks which stretched as far west as India. A silver bangle is also evidence for importation of luxury items. Some skeletons were laid on beds of rice, suggesting that this grain was a symbol of wealth. In all, 120 skeletons were found at Noen U-Loke. They were compared with 110 skeletons from Ban Lum Khao, which date from a period immediately preceding that of Noen U-Loke, and about 3 kilometers away.

Charles Higham characterized Noen U-Loke as a “proto-*pon*” community, that is, one on the verge of or in transition to a society with inherited status, through the maternal line.<sup>237</sup> *Pon* obtained their status through association with the construction of water features such as ponds. The term *fan* used in Chinese descriptions of Protohistoric Funan may denote *pon*. Some people with more burial offerings than others may have been male village leaders who claimed descent from a deified female ancestor. The resources invested in building the moats of Noen U-Loke began to increase in Mortuary Phase 3, when new patterns appear such as clustering of burials (perhaps representing specific families), and rice beds. One of the last burials at Noen U-Loke had an iron point embedded in his spine, perhaps indicating increased strife during the Iron Age.<sup>238</sup>

Of 350 pottery vessels from the site, the majority consisted of Phimai black vessels. Rice was almost always used as temper. Ceramic production at the site was demonstrated by comparing samples of the pottery with local clay, and by the discovery of pottery-making tools (anvils). There is no evidence of the potter’s wheel.

Although most of the burials belong to the Iron Age, the most common material used for jewellery was bronze. Finger and toe rings were the most common; many people wore multiple bronze rings on several fingers. Bangles and anklets were also quite numerous. Iron was almost always used for tools and weapons; only two iron bangles and one iron necklet set was found. Silver was found in the form of four rings. Two necklaces of gold beads were found.<sup>239</sup>

Some sort of wattle and daub technique using clay and bamboo suggests the construction of walls of this material. It is impossible to determine the shape of the structure for which this material was used.

Dougald O’Reilly calculated that the volume of water which the Noen U-Loke channels could have held would be enough to irrigate 56 hectares, producing enough rice to feed 624 people.<sup>240</sup> However, the significance of these figures is uncertain, given recent research on the site’s sedimentology (see subsequent discussion).

*Non Muang Kao*: Non Muang Kao, 21 kilometers southeast of Noen U-Loke, covers 27 hectares; its mound is 7 meters high. It was occupied around 500 BCE, abandoned around 200 BCE, reoccupied around 100 BCE, and abandoned again around 1 BCE/CE. When Noen U-Loke was occupied, Non Muang Kao was abandoned, and vice versa.<sup>241</sup> O’Reilly proposes that the moats around Non Muang Kao, which are up to 33 meters wide, were built during the Iron Age, possibly to control floodwater.<sup>242</sup> Features interpreted as a series of 10 clay floors represent another discovery which has rarely been recorded in Southeast Asia.

*Non Yang*: At this site on the Mun River, clay floors with split logs (a feature not found at Non Muang Khao) and walls of bamboo matting were reported. The floors/structures are associated with radiocarbon dates of 300 to 1 BCE.<sup>243</sup> These floors may have formed dwellings, or served another purpose such as rice-threshing.<sup>244</sup> Excavations at Ban Don Phlong revealed remains of what was interpreted as an area used by iron smiths.

*Ban Suai*: In Phimai City, southeast of the famous Prasat Hin Phimai temple, Ban Suai was excavated in 1966. Iron and Phimai black pottery were found in all levels of a possible midden deposit, with a low rectangular platform made of burnt clay lumps, on top of which fires had frequently been lit. In three corners of the rectangle were pots with unburnt human bone, two of which were complete skeletons. Two carbon dates were modern, the third calibrated to 165 BCE to 240 CE.<sup>245</sup>

## MOATS AND NATURE

After decades of speculation about their function, moats at six sites (Noen U-Loke, Non Muang Kao, Ban Non Khrua Chut, Ban Non Ngiu, Ban Makhm Thae, and Ban Non Wat) were studied by excavating trenches across them. The results were quite surprising. The conclusion is that “the regularity of shape and patterning of the moats in plan is a recent phenomenon, and probably reflects 20th century landscape tidying. The moats that have drawn so much attention to the archaeological sites largely represented modern landscape processes.” The moats probably date from a relatively short period during the mid- and late Iron Age, and became silted in fairly quickly after they were created.<sup>246</sup> Noen U-Loke and Non Muang Kao were on the banks of now-buried rivers. The earthworks were probably built to try to conserve water when environmental conditions were deteriorating. The inhabitants of the sites began to grow more trees and less rice. The outermost moats were man-made, but those near the mounds were modified natural channels. Buried channel features are different from those now visible on the surface. At Noen U-Loke five moats were found, some of which are now buried. These sites, and presumably others like them, expanded on top of earlier, now-buried channels. The oldest are closest to the mound.

The first people who lived on Khorat between 1500 and 500 BCE lived on high ground near rivers. At the beginning of the Iron Age, 500 BCE, they began to move onto the floodplain and modify the landscape. Between 200 BCE and 500 CE they were confronted by a decrease in the amount and predictability of water; they began to modify rivers, then to modify natural channels.<sup>247</sup> The monsoon weakened, and rainfall decreased by 50 per cent. There is little evidence that humans built new channels, or ramps.<sup>248</sup>

## EARLY MINERS

Very little research has been conducted on early mining techniques in Seasia. An early copper mine was discovered at Phu Lon, Nong Khai Province, near the Mekong River, in the 1980s. Implements included ore crushers, crucibles, and a casting mould. The site may have been occupied as early as 1500 BCE, with copper ore processing between 1000 and 275 BCE. A mine shaft with stone hammers was dated to 830 to 590 BCE.<sup>249</sup>

## CHAO PHRAYA VALLEY

More than 65 moated sites have been identified in the Chao Phraya valley of central Thailand.<sup>250</sup> These sites date from a variety of periods, from the Bronze Age to the Middle Classic. Several of the sites

are located in the vicinity of the city of Lopburi, northeast of Bangkok, which was an important site of the Angkor Empire during the Middle Classic, and has yielded evidence of early iron working. About 50 burials of the late Preclassic period have been found at the Lopburi Artillery site. The nearby Khao Wong Prachan valley has numerous sources of copper. At one site in the valley, Non Pa Wai, copper working debris covers 5 hectares. Copper smelting may have begun here as early as 1500 BCE. This does not prove that bronze was made, since there is no tin at the site, but it does indicate that a “copper age” may have preceded the Bronze Age in Thailand, as was the case in other parts of the world. Another copper-smelting site has been found at Nil Kham Haeng, also covering an extensive area (at least 3 hectares). Copper for these sites may have been mined at nearby Khao Phu Kha. Iron ore (haematite) was used to lower the melting point of the copper, but the smelters still had to achieve a temperature of 1150° to 1250°. The smelters cast ingots which could have been shipped to copper or bronze smiths hundreds of kilometers away.<sup>251</sup>

Phromthin Tai, about 20 kilometers from Lopburi, is surrounded by an irregular moat about 1 kilometer in diameter. A square feature to the northeast probably dates from the Classic. Under Classic period remains archaeologists have found at least 20 burials, glass and stone beads, stone tools, and iron slag. The oldest remains have been dated to the period 500 to 700 BCE.<sup>252</sup> This site as well as others of the Protoclassic and Early Classic are providing much evidence that the transition from the Preclassic to the Classic phase in Thailand was marked by continuity rather than change.

## THE IRON AGE OF CENTRAL AND NORTHEAST THAILAND

The Mun valley was apparently unoccupied before 2100 BCE, the date of the earliest Neolithic occupation of Ban Non Wat.<sup>253</sup> Welch proposed that the initial settlers of the Mun produced Tamyae-tradition ceramics dating from 1000 to 600 BCE.<sup>254</sup> At Ban Lum Khao these ceramics date to 1280 BCE.<sup>255</sup> The next phase of settlement in the Mun is associated with Prasat pottery, 600 to 200 BCE, followed by the famous Phimai Black tradition (or interaction sphere). This ware is most common within a 50-kilometer radius of Phimai, and is important because of the evidence it provides for a marketing system at this period. There is strong evidence of continuity in artifact styles from the Bronze to the Iron Age in the region rather than the introduction of new population, but ceramic production may have become more specialized.

The Iron Age in northeast Thailand has been divided into four phases.<sup>256</sup>

Phase I: 420 to 150 BCE. Pottery styles do not change; the amount of bronze used as grave offerings declines; iron appears, but is rare. New farm tools, socketed hoes appear.

Phase II: 150 BCE to 200 CE. Many traditions continue, but some new mortuary rituals begin, including rice chaff offerings, and mortuary wealth increases.

Phase III: CE 200 to 400. Phimai black ware appears: the first standardized style of pottery to cover an extensive area. Burials include more bronze jewellery, gold and silver rings, and imported glass and stone beads.

Phase IV: CE 400 to 600. Types of burial offerings remain the same, but the amount declines. More iron spears, sickles.

By the Iron Age, finds at Noen U-Loke support the conclusion that social status differences were becoming more pronounced. Burials began to cluster, suggesting that status could be inherited. Population may have increased, and emerging elite may have gained power over land. There is more evidence of differences in wealth between people within the same site, and weapons provide evidence of conflict.<sup>257</sup>

What could have brought about these changes? Rather than assuming that technology is the cause, the explanation would seem to be more complex. One possibility is increased environmental stress, including droughts and floods; the augmentation of natural channels detected in the northeast may be one sign of this.<sup>258</sup> Elsewhere in the world, social stratification hierarchy appears with bronze; only Seasia is an exception.<sup>259</sup> Population increase is often invoked to explain such changes, but what caused population to increase?

## THE GROWTH OF TRADE

Numerous sites in central Thailand were involved in long-distance trade in the late Preclassic period, both with other sites in mainland Southeast Asia such as Vietnam where the Dongson interaction sphere was developing, and with India. Ban Don Ta Phet, in west central Thailand, was occupied in the early fourth century BCE. More than 3,000 imported beads of agate, carnelian, and glass have been found there, including translucent pale green hexagonal beads which have also been found at Oc-èo, south Vietnam, and Pasemah, in the highlands of South Sumatra. Most of the glass beads found at Ban Don Ta Phet are identical to those made in south India, but some examples have a different composition. It has been suggested that they were made in Thailand or Myanmar, but no remains of glass production (making glass from sand) have been found in Seasia.

Carnelian beads in the shape of crouching tigers imitating Chinese miniature figurines made in China in the late third century BCE have been found at Ban Don Ta Phet and from the Samon valley in upper Myanmar to Khuan Luk Pat in the Isthmus of Kra. Ban Don Ta Phet yielded between 20 and 30 knobbed-base bronze bowls with a mixture of Indian and local motifs; other examples have been found at Khao Sam Kaeo and Thanh Hoa, Vietnam.<sup>260</sup>

The large quantities of agate and carnelian beads and other adornment from Ban Don Ta Phet, Noen U-Loke (116 agates) and Non Muang Kao (50 agates, of which 49 came from one grave)<sup>261</sup> are significant because they indicate the development of overland trade routes. At Noen U-Loke, glass, carnelian, and agate appear in level 6 (circa 800–600 BCE) and level 5 (600–400 BCE), but the majority appear in level 4 (50 BCE – 400 CE). The techniques used to manufacture the stone beads were quite varied. The possibility that at least some of the stone jewellery was made in Southeast Asia rather than India has been raised,<sup>262</sup> but no firm evidence of this activity has yet been reported. At Non Muang Kao, glass beads appear around the first century CE. Most of them were made by the drawing technique used in India, but some were made by wrapping the molten glass around a wire or mandrel. The mineral composition of the two types of beads is similar, however.<sup>263</sup>

Additional evidence of overland trade in northeast Thailand comes from evidence for salt production and trade. At Non Tung Pie Pon, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, remains of salt-making from natural

upwelling of salty water in the dry season have been found: water tanks, filtration tanks, and furnaces for boiling water associated with cord-marked bowls, Phimai black ware, and one radiocarbon date: CE 210  $\pm$  185. Villagers still make salt there today.<sup>264</sup> The earliest evidence of salt production has been found at Bo Phan Kan, Roi Et Province (fifth century BCE). Other sites with evidence of salt extraction are Bo Phan Khan and Don Taphan. At Bo Phan Khan clay plaster was discovered, possibly a similar feature as Non Tung Pie Pone. A radiocarbon date has been obtained from a lower layer there: 228 to 597 CE. At Don Taphan a basal layer is dated to 250 BCE to 341 CE.<sup>265</sup>

## IRON AGE INFLUENCE FROM INDIA?

What type of economic interaction took place between India and Southeast Asia at this period? Glover concluded that in the Iron Age “Southeast Asia was already part of a world trading system linking the civilizations of the Mediterranean Basin and Han China”, but it is difficult to decide whether this commerce coincided with new social relations based on market exchange, or whether Southeast Asians continued to perceive long-distance maritime trade as “an extension of the ‘Big Man’ prestige goods reciprocal type of economy”.<sup>266</sup>

During the Protoclassic, Southeast Asian kingdoms began to appropriate traits from India. Paul Wheatley believed that the “Big Man” system was inadequate to explain this development; he credited Indians with stimulating fundamental social transformations in Southeast Asia in the early centuries CE. Some archaeologists suggested that Khuan Luk Pat might have been a colonial enclave “founded and inhabited by foreigners” (i.e., Indians).<sup>267</sup>

Most recent scholarship does not support this interpretation. Charles Higham, for example, “differs from Wheatley’s interpretation in viewing the critical period between 500 BC and AD 800 as a continuum, with the Indian presence as but one of several interacting variables”.<sup>268</sup> In Higham’s view, when Funan became the main source of prestige goods from the west, the groups of the interior had to intensify their use of overland routes to the west. They had three choices: a western route to the coast at the head of the Gulf of Siam; overland trade with the Cham kingdoms of Vijaya and Kauthara; or to dominate the delta kingdoms themselves. “There is evidence that all three paths were taken.” On the other hand, he upholds a traditional school of thought which believes that large numbers of Indian visitors to Funan were instrumental in stimulating social change, and that much of the motivation for trade was to acquire articles of prestige for local elites to use in propping up their positions. This implies fundamental continuity with older theories of Indian influence.

## TRADING PORTS OF THE PRECLASSIC ERA

In the fourth century BCE, Alexander of Macedon set out on an expedition to India which would make him famous forever. Sailors from Seasia were already sailing to India from the east. The remains of their activities are now being studied by scholars who want to learn about the origins of the largest commercial network of the ancient world. Conquerors like Alexander the Great come and go; Alexander’s

empire died shortly after he did. The maritime trade route of the Indian Ocean on the other hand was held together for 2,000 years not by force or politics, but by merchant adventurers in small ships without maps or compasses who crossed the sea in the hope of bringing back rarities which would make them famous. Malayo-Polynesians crossed broad areas of Seasia in the Preclassic and were in contact with the islands of the western Pacific. Five pieces of obsidian found at Bukit Tengkorak, Sabah, had been brought there from Talasea, New Britain.<sup>269</sup>

## REGIONAL SYMBIOSIS IN THE PRECLASSIC?

Is it possible that the symbiosis between hunter-gatherers and farmers of the Prehistoric period was recreated on a larger scale by intra-regional symbiosis between equatorial and tropical Seasia during the Classic era? Did societies living in the equatorial zone between 5° north and south latitudes play a role analogous to that of the Agta of the Philippines as providers of forest products for societies living in the seasonal tropics who occupied the same niche in the relationship as the Palanan, as providers of carbohydrate? If this hypothesis is correct, inter-regional trade should have come into existence when the sequence of evolution in the two areas began to diverge.

Prehistoric trade was conducted on a broad scale in Seasia.<sup>270</sup> Dongson-style artifacts are one of the markers of such contact, and their distribution indicates routes of communication and trade which existed between 500 BCE and 100 CE.<sup>271</sup> It is difficult if not impossible to determine when the first Dongson drums began to be shipped from north Vietnam. Two bronze drums found at Kampong Sungai Lang, on the west coast of peninsular Malaysia, had been buried on top of a wooden plank which yielded radiocarbon dates between 1850 and 2435 BP.<sup>272</sup> This wide range does not yield much enlightenment, unfortunately. The concept of the interaction sphere is a useful approach to identifying the cultural processes which created the distribution of Dongson-style artifacts in Seasia.<sup>273</sup>

The oldest trading station in Seasia has been found on the east coast of the Siam-Malay peninsula, at Ko Kho Khao. This site became active in the late fifth century BCE and was busy for several centuries thereafter.<sup>274</sup> No site quite as old has yet been found on the west coast of the peninsula. Phu Khao Tong on the west coast is linked to Ko Kho Khao by an easy trans-peninsular route, and evidence of international trade as early as the third century BCE has been found there.<sup>275</sup>

Kuala Kelumpang, Selinsing, on the west coast of peninsular Malaysia has yielded radiocarbon dates as old as 200 BCE.<sup>276</sup> This swampy area was never a major political center, but it seems to have had a long, mysteriously obscure life as a home for small ports. Kuala Selinsing seems to be a good example of the tendency for deltaic areas to foster the development of settlements which moved from one stream to another, perhaps in response to the silting up of old courses and the formation of new ones. These ports probably occupied the second tier of a hierarchy of ports. In Kuala Selinsing's case, the higher-level port was probably in Kedah. Foreign merchants were probably allowed to call only at ports at the highest tier, where central control was strong and customs duties could be collected. No doubt foreign merchants sometimes succeeded in evading these regulations, but there were penalties for the foreign merchants and the local chiefs if they were caught.



No ports of the Preclassic have yet been discovered in Vietnam or the Philippines, but there is a high probability that they will be. Numerous imports from India such as beads of glass and stone have now discovered at Preclassic sites in the hinterland of mainland Seasia (see “The growth of trade”, this chapter). The routes by which they were carried inland, and the socioeconomic mechanisms which enabled them to be exchanged, probably several times before they reached their final destinations, also remain to be sorted out.

## KHAO SAM KAE0

Khao Sam Kae0 is situated on the shore of the South China Sea. It is improbable that Indian objects found there came directly by ship at this period. *Qian Han Shu* reports that a mission sent by Han emperor Wu (140–87 BCE) to Huangzhi, believed to have been in India, sailed in “barbarian” ships to a place on the peninsula called Shenli, then crossed overland to Fugandulu, then took another ship across the Bay of Bengal.<sup>277</sup> Such missions were normally conducted by eunuchs who were given the onerous job of dealing with foreigners. Khao Sam Kae0 is one possible location for Shenli. Khao Sam Kae0 lies 5 kilometers inland, covering 35 hectares on four hilltops and three valleys, at the foot of which runs the Tha Tapao River. Valley 1, well sheltered from the storms of the northeast monsoon, may have been a mooring station.

A system of 17 ramparts thought to have been up to 4.2 meters high has been mapped. No space is completely enclosed by ramparts, though Hill 3 has ramparts on three sides. All but one are aligned parallel to the river, transversely across the slopes. They cut across the topography; this possibly had symbolic significance. Five may have been meant to retain water;<sup>278</sup> they have a different construction technique, utilizing pebbles to reinforce one face, and an internal structure composed of layers of materials of varying texture (sand, gravel, pebbles). The others may have demarcated specific areas for social and occupational groups, and formed defensive structures. One rampart lies on top of occupation layers dated by radiocarbon to the early fourth to second century BCE; another lies under a layer with iron-smithing debris dated to 390/310 and 200 BCE. Hillsides were terraced to provide flat foundations for structures of perishable material, traces of which include postholes and pisé floors; some have yielded several occupation layers.

Villagers reported finding three Dongson drums on Hill 1. The excavators hypothesize that Hills 1 and 2 were allocated to local residents, while Hills 3 and 4 may have been allocated to foreigners from South, Southeast, and East Asia. Skilled craftsmen worked at the feet of Hills 1 and 2, making ornaments of hard stone and glass by carving it in the same way that hard stone is worked. The glass may have come from northeast India. It is further hypothesized that some Indian craftsmen were resident at Khao Sam Kae0 to supervise the local workers. Some were made of nephrite from Fengtian, Taiwan, which is known to have been used at other Late Preclassic and Protoclassic sites in Seasia.<sup>279</sup> There may have been a cemetery on Hill 2, but it has not been excavated. The burial customs could provide additional valuable information on the cultural affiliations of the people who lived here. Pottery on Hills 1 and 2 exhibits shell-incised ceramics of a Seasian style sometimes called Sahuynh-Kalanay which is also found in south Vietnam and the Philippines.

Stone was also worked on Hills 3 and 4. Some were made in typical Seasian style such as the oblong ear ornaments with gaps in the hoop and three conical projects often called *lingling-o* which are found as far east as the Philippines. Some were made with Indian techniques, others with local workmanship. Hill 3 is marked by remains of iron working, which was carbon-dated to the period from the fourth to second centuries BCE. The workmanship was, however, characterized as “rudimentary”.<sup>280</sup> Looters also reported finding fragments of high-tin bronze bowls in the northern part of the site (Hills 3–4) similar to those known from Ban Don Ta Phet.<sup>281</sup> If they were made here, this would contrast strongly with the skill level of the iron production, since high-tin bronze is considered difficult to create.

## EVIDENCE FOR A FOREIGN ENCLAVE

Evidence in favour of the hypothesis that an exogenous population lived on Hills 3 and 4 includes the discovery of Indian rouletted and knobbed pottery, Northern Black Polished Ware (fourth to second centuries BCE),<sup>282</sup> and 84 pieces of pottery of a style found in China during the Western Han dynasty (220 BCE–9 CE). Indian rouletted ware (made between the second century BCE and third century CE) is relatively widespread in late Preclassic and Protoclassic Seasia (it has been found as far east as Bali),<sup>283</sup> but Khao Sam Kaeo is the first site in Seasia outside of Vietnam to yield Han Dynasty pottery in archaeological context. Local potters in Khao Sam Kaeo may have imitated the Northern Black Polished Wares.<sup>284</sup>

Stones probably meant as personal seals (probably for merchants) have what appear to be personal names carved on them in a Prakrit language and Brāhmī script. Some are unfinished. Chinese-related artifacts in addition to the pottery storage jars previously mentioned include a bronze mirror and other mirror fragments (some of which are paralleled in south Vietnam),<sup>285</sup> an arrowhead, an axe, and two bronze seals, one bearing a Chinese inscription, “Seal of Lü Yougong”.

This data can be interpreted in two ways. The conventional assumption is that such concentrations of imported artifacts imply the presence of foreigners. In Sembiran, Bali, a burial from which DNA has been extracted, enables us to confirm that at least one person of South Asian ancestry was present there 2,000 years ago (see “Bali” in “The Protoclassic in the eastern archipelago”, this chapter). This does not mean that such an occurrence was common, however. During the Classic period, there is little evidence for the migration of craftsmen to Seasia. Craftsmen were not highly mobile in the ancient world. It is probable that Seasians went to India and learned the necessary skills there which they then brought back to Seasia. Seasian sailors were the most skilled in the ancient world; they sailed directly across the Indian Ocean to east Africa, and settled the island of Madagascar. It is at least equally plausible that Indian-style artifacts found in Khao Sam Kaeo were made by Seasians who learned their skills in India. It is likely that the Seasian sailors and merchants who went to India outnumbered the South Asians who went to Seasia.

There is no archaeological or historical evidence of foreign enclaves in Seasia for the next 1,000 years, until the Middle Classic. It is possible, but again unlikely, that an enclave would have formed in Khao Sam Kaeo, but that this practice stopped precisely at the time when South–Seasian trade was expanding.

The bar for proving the existence of foreign enclaves in Seasia must be set high: to be acceptable, written evidence should be available to complement archaeological data. The possibility that foreign artifacts were imported by local people is always great enough that the presence of foreign artifacts alone cannot be accepted as evidence of the presence of foreign residents.

As the excavators note, at Khao Sam Kaeo:

This 'indianised' South China Sea product repertoire differs in many respects from what would be found in contemporaneous South Asian sites. These very fine ornaments display a wide range of morphologies, some of them only rarely or never used for ornaments in South Asia. These later 'South China Sea indianised' products. . . would have been produced mainly for Seasian populations.<sup>286</sup>

It may be asked whether foreign craftsmen would have been needed to supervise the work in south Thailand, when the techniques were adapted to producing items in non-Indian taste.

## THE WESTERN TERMINUS: PHU KHAO THONG

The east coast of the Siam-Malay Peninsula is dangerous for sailors: it is exposed to strong northeasterly winds and heavy rain at the end of the year. There are no large modern ports along the east coast of the peninsula. Most settlements and well-protected anchorages are located in the lee of protective headlands or in estuaries, such as at Satingphra. The island of Tioman off the southeast coast provided an important source of fresh water, but no major port ever developed there. Ships coming from the South China Sea either made for the west coast of Borneo, or more often for the protection of the ports on the east coast of Sumatra. The west coast presents fewer threats to sailors. The onshore winds from the southwest are usually of low energy and humidity, and there are many islands off the coast to provide shelter.

There have been many historic ports on the west coast, from Moulmein (Mawlamain) and Martaban (Mottama) in Myanmar to Takuapa, Phuket, Kedah, Penang, and Melaka, as well as modern Kuala Lumpur.

Many ports appeared along the west coast of southern Thailand in the late Preclassic and Protoclassic eras. The earliest yet discovered is Phu Khao Thong. These have all been heavily looted, and only limited excavations have been carried out there.<sup>287</sup>

From Khao Sam Kaeo it is possible to proceed upstream along the Tha Tapao River to the watershed of the peninsula, then to the head of the Kraburi River, which debouches into the Andaman Sea 20 kilometers north of a low-lying coastal zone where three early sites have been found within 2 kilometers of one another: Phu Khao Thong, Bang Kluai Nok, and Khao Kluai. A fourth site, Rai Nai, is 5 kilometers from the coast. These sites are also on hills which were terraced, but with no evidence of ramparts.

Phu Khao Thong was not Khao Sam Kaeo's first west coast trading partner; the archaeological sequence here begins one or two centuries later than at Khao Sam Kaeo. Probably an earlier site exists somewhere in the area. The two sites share a fair number of similarities in the range of imported

artifacts: rouletted wares, knobbed wares, and other Indian Fine Wares. The range of the latter type of pottery at Phu Khao Thong is greater than at Khao Sam Kaeo. Important finds include a sherd with a probable inscription in Tamil Brahmi of the second century CE. This makes it the oldest Tamil inscription yet found in Seasia, replacing an inscribed touchstone from Khuan Luk Pat, Krabi Province, farther south along the west coast.<sup>288</sup> Another sherd has an inscription in regular Brahmi which may date from the fourth century BCE.

Phu Khao Thong and Khao Sam Kaeo have yielded fragments of containers made of steatite, often called “soapstone” because of its softness. These may have been ritual containers, but could also have been used for everyday commodities. Both sites display much evidence of glass and stone working. At Phu Khao Thong, craftsmen made glass beads by melting imported glass, rather than carving it as at Khao Sam Kaeo. The glass was imported from Rome rather than India.<sup>289</sup> Other artifacts with Mediterranean affinities include intaglios and pendants. A turquoise blue fritware sherd probably came from the Persian Gulf.

Evidence that the site continued to be used for some time during the Protohistoric period consists of fragments of a Chinese mirror of a style dated to the Eastern Han (25–220 CE), and a coin of the “rising sun” type associated with the fifth century and later in mainland Seasia (Halin in Myanmar, U Thong in Thailand, as well as in Cambodia and south Vietnam),<sup>290</sup> and a seal in Brahmi written in reverse so that when stamped it would provide a positive image. In the middle of the stamp is a common auspicious Indic symbol called a *bhadrapitha*. Around it is a text legible as Sanskritised Prakrit reading *brahaspatiśarmasanāvikasa*. The seal thus belong to someone named Brahaspatisharma, who was a sailor.<sup>291</sup> The script has been dated between the first to fourth centuries.

An important subject for future research concerns the nature of the people who lived in the hinterlands between the two coasts. In what may be the first instance of archaeological inquiry into sites along the presumed overland routes, hard stone ornaments similar to those found in coastal sites in the late Prehistoric period were discovered in Khao Muenni Caves, Chumphon Province. Specialized collecting groups almost certainly lived in the center of the peninsula at this period; their descendants live there today. There must have been significant interactions between the coastal and hinterland people at this period, possibly based on symbiotic exchanges of subsistence goods accompanied by symbolic gift-giving.<sup>292</sup>

## SOUTHERN PENINSULAR PORTS OF THE PRECLASSIC

More ports of the Prehistoric lie farther south, on the coast of the Straits of Melaka. Research began at Kuala Kelumpang, Selinsing, Perak, in the 1920s. Ceramics found there include sherds from Oc-èo, south Vietnam.<sup>293</sup> Excavations yielded several items imported from India such as a carnelian seal with a Sanskrit inscription dated palaeographically to the fourth or fifth centuries.<sup>294</sup> In 1987 further excavation focused on eight shell mounds in mangrove swamps of the delta of a small river. Important discoveries included shell ornaments, metal, stone, bone, a wooden object (perhaps part of a boat), beads of glass and stone, raw glass, and 11 human burials, which yielded radiocarbon dates from 200 BCE to the tenth century CE.<sup>295</sup>

## MAINLAND MARKETS: BAN DON TA PHET, CHANSEN

Luxury items such as stone and glass beads have been found in hinterland sites of the Preclassic. In addition to the moated and ramparted sites of the Mekong discussed previously, several have been discovered in central Thailand. The oldest and best known site is Ban Don Ta Phet, in west central Thailand, where more than 3,000 beads of agate, carnelian, and glass have been found in burials dated to 390 to 360 BCE.<sup>296</sup>

It was long assumed that glass and hard stone ornaments found in Preclassic sites in Seasia were made in India. Recent technical studies have led to a reconsideration of this assumption. Most of the glass beads found at Ban Don Ta Phet have chemical compositions known to have been used by glassmakers in south India, but a few have a composition unlike any known in India. This raises the possibility that early Seasians also made glass, either in Thailand or possibly Myanmar,<sup>297</sup> but this hypothesis remains to be confirmed; no glass-making furnaces of this period have been discovered in Seasia. A study of stone artifacts found in Thai sites concluded that the stone can be found locally and would not necessarily have been imported from India.<sup>298</sup> By the second or first centuries BCE, carnelian beads in the shape of crouching tigers imitating Chinese miniature figurines used as military insignia during the reign of Qin Shi Huang (late third century BCE) found in Myanmar and Thailand may also have been made in Seasia, perhaps in the Samon valley. Questions of the location of manufacture aside, it is now clear that much of mainland Seasia from north-central Myanmar to the east coast of Vietnam was connected to spheres of interaction including South and East Asia before India or China existed, as either political or cultural units.

Another type of artifact which strongly implies contact with India are bronze bowls with knobbed bases and incised decorations in a mixture of Indian and local motifs found at Ban Don Ta Phet, Khao Sam Kaeo, and Thanh Hoa, Vietnam. It is not clear whether this type of bowl was first developed in Thailand or India; they have a high tin content, and tin is found in Thailand but not in India. This type of alloy is brittle and difficult to work, so special skills were required to produce them. Many more examples are known from Thailand than from India.<sup>299</sup> Some technically superior bowls have been found in India, so the tin may have been imported and used there.<sup>300</sup> More collaboration between Seasian and South Asian archaeologists is needed to resolve such problems.

These sites have shed considerable light on the age and nature of the earliest trade between Seasia, India, and China. They prove that Preclassic exchanges of luxury items intended for the elite of the time were well organized. Seasia was well connected to China and the Indian Ocean centuries before the first written sources appear. The economic relationship had become firm before the cultural elements which we define as Classical India had formed in India herself. Thus the later evolution of the relationship between the two regions has to be seen as the continuation of a sphere of interaction which formed long before major exchanges of artistic and literary forms occurred.

## PRECLASSIC CULTURES OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA: SAHUYNH AND KALANAY

The Preclassic cultures of Sahuynh in south Vietnam and Kalanay in the Philippines are on opposite sides of the South China Sea, yet they share many features. This link is another vivid hint at the intensity of communication which must have crossed that sea in Preclassic times.

Sahuynh culture, which existed from the fifth century BCE to the first century CE, is represented by jar burials containing pottery and jewellery. Dongson culture and other Preclassic cultures of the Seasian mainland did not engage in this practice except for a rare example at the Dongson site of Lang Vac.<sup>301</sup> The Sahuynh peoples are believed to have been linguistically related to the ethnolinguistic group of the historical period known as the Cham, who speak an Austronesian language. Sahuynh earthenware ceramics bear strong similarities to the ceramics of the Kalanay culture of the Philippines.<sup>302</sup> Notable artifacts associated with Sahuynh culture are specific types of jewellery, including the *lingling-o* and bicephalous ear ornaments which have been found in Preclassic sites of Sahuynh, Palawan, in the Philippines, Sarawak, and Thailand.<sup>303</sup>

The study of Sahuynh culture began in 1909 when a French customs official discovered burial urns containing cremated human remains at Thanh Duc, near the village of Sahuynh. More than 120 jar burials have been found within an area measuring 80 by 50 meters.<sup>304</sup> Excavations in Sahuynh sites in the Quang Ngai Province from the 1920s through the 1940s uncovered more than 500 jar burials. Sahuynh artifacts are distributed from Quang Tri Province in the north to the Can Gio district east of Ho Chi Minh City, from the mouth of the Dong Nai River along the coast to southern boundaries of Bac Bo. By 1975 approximately 1,000 burials had been recorded.<sup>305</sup>

Sahuynh culture is only known from burials; no habitation sites have been found. Sahuynh chronology can be organized into three phases. In Phase I, jar burials contain locally made bronze and iron artifacts and a few decorated beads. Burials of Phase II contain more imported goods such as items from China, agate and carnelian beads, and glass and gold ornaments in large lidded burial urns. Phase III includes burials on offshore islands and more items from China and India.<sup>306</sup>

Go Ma Voi (fifth to third century BCE) is a Phase I Sahuynh site. Burials here contained the largest number of bronze objects (29) of any early sites in central Vietnam. The site also yielded the first bimetallic tool (bronze and iron) in the Sahuynh area.<sup>307</sup>

Lai Nghi, a Phase II Sahuynh site, was excavated in 2002 and 2004. The site yielded 63 jar burials, and a few very rich extended inhumation graves containing more than 10,000 beads made in a variety of materials—glass, carnelian, agate, rock, crystal, and nephrite. The unequal distribution of beads among the graves suggests that Lai Nghi comprised a hierarchical society.<sup>308</sup> Metal artifacts found included iron tools and weapons, and bronze mirrors, bells, coins, and bracelets. Bronze items such as Han dynasty mirrors and bronze bowls, Chinese coins, and animal-shaped carnelian beads demonstrate the existence of an established exchange network between Sahuynh societies and Han China, either direct or indirect.<sup>309</sup>

Xom Oc on Ly Son Island represents a Phase III Sahuynh site. The inhabitants collected large quantities of shellfish, and fish represented an important part of their diet. Mortuary artifacts included bronze arrowheads, iron knives, and numerous artifacts made from shells.<sup>310</sup> Suoi Chinh, another site on the same island, yielded Han ceramics, glass beads, and iron tools.<sup>311</sup> Other important Sahuynh sites located in coastal regions include Giong Ca Vo,<sup>312</sup> near Ho Chi Minh City, where 18 bicephalous animal-headed pendants made of glass were discovered. These might have been produced locally; there is evidence for local glass working activity at 400 BCE.<sup>313</sup>

Research in central Vietnam around the Thu Bon River has shown that Sahuynh culture was not limited to the coast. Tra Kieu, the capital of a Cham kingdom in the Protoclassic and Classic, has yielded Sahuynh artifacts and Indo-Roman rouletted ware, demonstrating that the region had links beyond



Seasia and China.<sup>314</sup> Go Dua (circa third century CE) near Tra Kieu also yielded extensive imports of the Preclassic, including a late Western Han mirror, two seals bearing Chinese characters, and an ash-glazed ceramic vessel.

The Thu Bon River formed part of an important trading network which formed during the Sahuynh era, then persisted through the Han colonization of north Vietnam into the Classic and Postclassic.<sup>315</sup> Go Cam (circa second century CE) is another site which demonstrates continuity between the later Sahuynh culture and the later Nan Yue period through artifacts such as Han seals, tiles, and ceramics.<sup>316</sup> Other artifacts including gold objects and Han bronze mirrors demonstrate the prosperity of the trade in the Thu Bon River area. Chinese sources note the demand for products found there, such as ivory, rhinoceros horn, feathers, and aromatic wood, from the Preclassic to the Postclassic eras.

Sahuynh sites contain more iron objects than Dongson, including socketed tools such as spades, picks, axes, sickles, tanged knives, spindle whorls, rings, and spiral bracelets. Sahuynh culture also made decorative bronzes such as bells, bracelets, and small containers.

Sahuynh ceramics, *lingling-o*, and bicephalous ear ornaments demonstrate a close connection with an archaeological culture in the Philippines known as Kalanay, after a cave which W.G. Solheim II excavated in 1964. Sahuynh and Kalanay pottery types include red slipped vessels with curvilinear designs enclosed by incised lines, which led Solheim to the conclusion that both belong to a single pottery tradition.<sup>317</sup> The Sahuynh-Kalanay connection is supported by jar burial sites in the Philippines, with copper and bronze items such as socketed axes, spearheads, arrowheads, axe casting moulds, gold beads, and jade *ling-ling-o* ear ornaments similar to those in Sahuynh sites. The Sahuynh-Kalanay Pottery Tradition also displays a connection with the pottery tradition of another archaeological culture, Lapita, which the first Malayo-Polynesians to venture into the western Pacific took with them.<sup>318</sup>

## ARTIFACTS AND INTERACTION SPHERES

Diagnostic Sahuynh artifacts, the *lingling-o* and bicephalous ear ornaments made of nephrite, have been found in sites spread over an extended geographical area between 500 BCE and 500 CE. The bicephalous ornaments are found in the Philippines, East Malaysia, central Thailand (Ban Don Ta Phet and U Thong), and southern Vietnam, forming a halo around the southern and eastern coasts of the South China Sea. In Vietnam most of these ornaments were found in two regions: Quang Nam and south-east of Ho Chi Minh City, where these artifacts were probably produced.<sup>319</sup> The *lingling-o* are slightly more widespread, adding sites in eastern Malaysia, eastern Cambodia, and peninsular Thailand. Raw, uncut nephrite was sent as blanks from workshops in eastern Taiwan, near Fengtian nephrite deposits, to Southeast Asia.<sup>320</sup> Blanks have been found in the Philippines, and the ornaments recovered from Sahuynh sites suggest that nephrite was fashioned into *lingling-o* and bicephalous ear ornaments in local workshops.<sup>321</sup> At Khao Sam Kaeo, a Neolithic adze from Taiwan was discarded after an attempt to rework it into an animal-headed pendant.<sup>322</sup> In addition to nephrite, *lingling-o* and bicephalous ornaments were made of glass.<sup>323</sup> Imported raw glass could have been re-melted to fashion the ear ornaments using moulds, or workmen could have fashioned them using cutting tools and bamboo drills.

The geographical distribution of the *lingling-o* and bicephalous animal pendants demonstrates the extent of another interaction sphere analogous to the Dongson sphere, but within which raw material was exchanged and locally worked, using similar techniques and tools. It is also possible that a small number of highly skilled craftsmen acquired the raw stones in Taiwan and travelled to coastal areas of the South China Sea to produce these ornaments for the local elites.<sup>324</sup> The reason why the Taiwanese jade ceased to be worked around 500 CE, toward the end of the Protoclassic, remains enigmatic.

The wide distribution of the *lingling-o* inspired Solheim to conceive of a communication network via which “ideas, tool types, and elements of many different shared technologies” were distributed throughout the coastal areas of the South China Sea, Japan, the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, island Southeast Asia, and coastal mainland Southeast Asia in what he termed the “Maritime Trading Network”, which he argued was developed by a people he called Nusantao, who originated from south-eastern island Southeast Asia in the sixth millennium BCE.<sup>325</sup> However, the circumstantial nature of the evidence connecting the artifacts, including earthenware pottery which cannot be safely ascribed to any specific ethnolinguistic or cultural group of people, have deterred scholars from endorsing the Nusantao idea. Although the ear ornaments are highly uniform in shape and size, it is now obvious that they were produced in local workshops rather than produced or traded by any specific group of people. The fact that some ear ornaments were fashioned out of different types of nephrite and even glass is another indication that a process of localization occurred in the production of these artifacts.

The distribution of Sahuynh-Kalanay pottery represents another interaction sphere, with a common shared tradition represented in pottery decoration techniques, designs, and forms. The relationship between the Sahuynh-Kalanay pottery tradition, the *lingling-o* jewellery tradition, and the Dongson bronze tradition is not yet clear, but all three data sets reinforce the conclusion that a sophisticated network of trade in status symbols criss-crossed the South China Sea in the Preclassic era, and gradually faded away during the Protoclassic, when a new set of status symbols replaced the old one.

## THE PROTOCLASSIC IN THE EASTERN ARCHIPELAGO

### Bali

Protoclassic remains have been found at a number of sites in eastern Indonesia. One of these, Bali, may have been known to the Chinese as Po-li before 443 CE. The first mission from Po-li arrived in China in 473. Bali occupies a strategic position on the route to Maluku (the Moluccas, or Spice Islands), but its people have not been known as seafarers. Probably it was a stop-over for ships from Java or Sumatra on the way to Maluku.

Gilimanuk at Bali’s western tip has yielded the oldest dated gold objects in Indonesia: eye covers found in a layer dated between 100 BCE to 100 CE. A Chinese source from the Early Classic period describes burial ceremonies in Poli in which gold covers were put on the mouths of corpses and ornaments were placed on the arms and legs; the corpses were then cremated. The custom of making face covers persisted into the Classic era. The custom of covering body orifices with gold existed in India and China, as well

as in other parts of Seasia, including Java, the Philippines, and Sulawesi. Gold-foil covers discovered at a prehistoric site in Tinnevely, southern India, have different shapes than the Indonesian examples.

Excavations on Bali's northeast coast revealed two important sites from the early Protoclassic: Pacung and Sembiran, near the modern village of Julah; both yielded objects imported from India, including beads of glass and carnelian. A sherd inscribed with Kharoshthi script from India was found at Sembiran.<sup>326</sup> More than 100 fragments of Romano-Indian rouletted ware from Sembiran were made in the last two centuries BCE and the first century CE and by potters in India, probably in Tamil Nadu. Analysis of a sherd of this ware found at Tra Kieu, central Vietnam, in a first-century BCE to first century context,<sup>327</sup> and nine sherds from south India, Sri Lanka, and Bali yielded the conclusion that all were probably imported from the same site.<sup>328</sup>

Mitochondrial DNA analysis of a tooth dated to the period 340 BC to 20 BCE found at Pacung, 200 meters from Sembiran, revealed that its owner's haplotype is mainly shared with people from South Asia. The person who lost the tooth had a terrestrial diet, whereas Balinese of this period are thought to have depended on marine food sources.<sup>329</sup>

The Sembiran-Pacung area remained an important destination for sailors for 1,000 years. Inscriptions from the Middle Classic (896–1181 CE) mention merchants, including foreigners who lived in a *kuta* (probably a walled enclave or fortified settlement), a merchant guild, and market officials.

## Kalimantan (Borneo)

No foreign records from the Protoclassic period mention Borneo. This makes it all the more surprising that a cluster of seven Sanskrit inscriptions should be found on the southeast coast of the island, at Muara Kaman, in the Kutai region in the upper valley of the Mahakam River. These inscriptions in a south Indian Brahmi script dated on palaeographic grounds to the early fifth century may be the oldest in Indonesia.<sup>330</sup> They are even older than the oldest stone inscriptions from south India in this script; south Indian inscriptions of this period were written on copper plates. The inscriptions were written at the order of a king named Mūlavarman and carved on stone posts known as *yupa* to commemorate gifts of cattle, a “wish-yielding tree”, and possibly gold to Brahmins. In India, such posts were normally made of wood; only three stone *yupa* posts have been reported from all of India. Why Kutai has yielded more than the whole of India, and why the first inscriptions in Indonesia should have been erected in such a remote area, far from known trade routes linking the archipelago with India, are mysterious.

The Kutai inscriptions depict religion of a form of Hinduism which is closer to that of the *Vedas* than to the *bhakti*, or devotional form, which was evolving in India around this time. They mention a sanctuary but no specific deities. They were connected with a royal consecration ritual (*rājasūya*), conducted by brahmanas, involving sacrificial rituals which took a year to complete. The *aśvamedha* ceremony involving sacrifices of horses took even longer. *Rājasūya* rituals were later replaced in India and Seasia by simpler ceremonies called *abhiśeka*.

The inscriptions portray a society in transition. Aśvavarman founded a lineage (*vaṁśa*) and had a son named Mūlavarman; both names are Sanskrit. Aśvavarman's father, however, had an Austronesian

name. The same phenomenon is replicated in the first inscription to record a kingdom in central Java, in 732. Sanjaya, the founder of Mataram, has a Sanskrit name, but his uncle was named Sannaha, which is a Sanskritized version of a Javanese name.<sup>331</sup> In the story of the founding of the first Malay kingdom in Palembang in the *Malay Annals*, the original name of the first king was Malay, Sang Nila Utama, but he underwent a consecration ritual and changed his name to Sanskrit (Sri Tri Buana). When he founded a kingdom, he changed the island's name from Malay (Temasek) to Sanskrit (Singapura). Thus the correlation between royalty and Sanskritization is clearly depicted in Indonesian sources; the Muara Kaman inscriptions are the first to depict a process which occurred repeatedly for almost a millennium.

Buddhism appears to have arrived in Kutai at a very early stage. A German explorer named Carl Bock recorded in 1885 that men digging near Muara Kaman had found a number of carved stones which may have belonged to a grave, and a beautiful bronze statue of Buddha, which is interesting because of webs between the fingers. This was a technique of Gandhara sculptors which was a means of preventing the stone from breaking. It seems that the Indonesians who made the statue did not understand the reason for the web and reproduced it.<sup>332</sup> It probably dates from the late Protoclassic.<sup>333</sup>

Unfortunately, in the early 1990s many more sites in Muara Kaman were looted, and much historical data were lost. Known remains include brick ruins, probably of temples, stone and bronze statuary, ceramics, and beads, but without context it is impossible to date them.

### The Sikendeng Buddha

Few signs of Classic culture have been discovered in Sulawesi. A few traces of ancient Buddhism have been reported there. The most famous is one of eight major Buddha images thought to date from this period in Seasia, and the only one which was indisputably made in India.

The statue was found in 1921 during road construction at the foot of a small hill on the bank of the Karama River, opposite the mouth of the Mahakam, about 10 kilometers inland from the Sikendeng plain. The statue is similar to two others from Sumatra (the Komering River of Palembang and Solok, Jambi), but the Dutch scholar Bosch was not sure that the statue came from Java or Sumatra. He dated it to the second to fifth centuries.

The Karama River's source is in the highland of a region known as Luwu. A priest's bell with a stylized *vajra* (an icon of esoteric Buddhism) was donated to the musicological collection of the Bataviaasch Genootschap by the chief of Luwu before 1933.<sup>334</sup>

### NOTES

- 1 The term *Pithecanthropus alalus* (mute ape-man) had been coined by Ernst Haeckel in *The History of Natural Creation*, 1874.
- 2 Hallam L. Movius Jr. (1948). "Perhaps the most important single conclusion to be drawn from the implications of the new archaeological material brought to light during the last fifteen years [i.e., 1930–45] in Southern and Eastern Asia [the term "Southeast Asia" was not yet current in scholarship] is that this area cannot be considered

in any sense ‘progressive’ from a cultural point of view. Indeed, throughout the early portion of the Old Stone Age the tools consist for the most part of relatively monotonous and unimaginative assemblages of choppers, chopping-tools, and hand-adzes . . . the archaeological, or palaeo-ethnological, material very definitely indicates that as early as Lower Palaeolithic times Southern and Eastern Asia as a whole was a region of cultural retardation. Therefore, it seems very unlikely that this vast area could ever have played a vital and dynamic role in early human evolution, although very primitive forms of Early Man apparently persisted there long after types at a comparable stage of physical evolution had become extinct elsewhere” (page 411).

- 3 Hutterer 1982.
- 4 Colinvaux 2001: 30.
- 5 Odum 1971: 149.
- 6 M. Aubert et al. 2014, Roebroeks 2014.
- 7 Bellwood 1997: 64.
- 8 Bellwood 1988, Anderson 1990.
- 9 Chester Gorman, personal communication, December 1975.
- 10 Gorman 1970.
- 11 Isaac 1977.
- 12 Golson 1977.
- 13 Penny et al. 1996.
- 14 Bernard K. Maloney 1996.
- 15 Penny et al. 1996: 21.
- 16 Maloney 1995; Spriggs 1989.
- 17 Datan and Bellwood 1991.
- 18 Peter Bellwood 2001.
- 19 Solheim 1975.
- 20 See the criticisms of hierarchies in general by Adams 1988.
- 21 Pigott 1998.
- 22 Wolters 1979.
- 23 Hutterer 1976, 1977a, 1982.
- 24 Scheinfeldt et al. 2006.
- 25 Higham 2002; Bellwood 2005.
- 26 W.G. Solheim II 2006.
- 27 Halcrow and Tayles 2011: 50.
- 28 Higham 2004; Higham and Higham 2009.
- 29 For example, Bray 1980; Smith 2001.
- 30 Donohue and Denham 2010.
- 31 Hill et al. 2007.
- 32 Matisoo-Smith and Horsburgh 2012: 127.
- 33 S. Oppenheimer and M. Richards 2001.
- 34 G.R. Scott and Christy G. Turner II 1997.
- 35 Doran 1981: 91.
- 36 Murdock 1959: 222–224; Fuller et al. 2014; Watson and Woodhouse 2001.
- 37 The Pleistocene is the geological era which began two million years ago and ended about 11,500 years ago. During the Pleistocene the earth’s climate experienced major cycles of glaciation. The current era is called the Holocene. It began when the last glacial period came to an end.
- 38 Teeth of *Homo erectus* have been reported from Tham Khuyen, north Vietnam, dated around 475,000 years ago; Dennell 2009: 249.
- 39 Sémah et al. 2000; Bettis et al. 2004.
- 40 Brandon-Jones 1998; van der Kaars and Dam 1995.

- 41 Anne-Marie Sémah 1984, 1996.
- 42 Dennell 2009: 146.
- 43 F. Sémah, A.-M. Sémah, and Tony Djubiantono 2000.
- 44 Mayr 1950.
- 45 Ciochon et al. 1996.
- 46 Demeter et al. 2005.
- 47 Tougard et al. 1998.
- 48 François Sémah 1996.
- 49 Demeter et al. 2012. A mandible found at the same site in 2011, with a chin similar to that of modern humans but other more archaic traits, is part of a group of specimens which indicates that the archaic/modern dichotomy is not as clearly expressed in Asia as in Africa or Europe, and that the evolution of AMH may have been more complex than previously assumed; Demeter et al. 2015.
- 50 Barker et al. 2007; Reynolds and Barker 2015.
- 51 Bowler et al. 2003.
- 52 Morwood et al. 2004.
- 53 Bartstra 1976.
- 54 Movius 1948.
- 55 Forestier et al. 2013.
- 56 T.E.G. Reynolds 1993: 3.
- 57 F. Sémah 1996; Simanjuntak and Sémah 1996.
- 58 Soejono 2001.
- 59 Hutterer 1977a.
- 60 Choi and Driwantoro 2007.
- 61 Puech 1983.
- 62 Morewood et al. 1998.
- 63 T.E.G. Reynolds 1993: 3.
- 64 Forestier et al. 2013.
- 65 Zeitoun et al. 2012.
- 66 Forestier et al. 2014.
- 67 Spriggs 1989.
- 68 Zurainah Majid 1982.
- 69 Barker et al. 2007; Reynolds and Barker 2015.
- 70 Bellwood 1997.
- 71 Ibid.: p. 179.
- 72 Glover 1981.
- 73 Glover 1977.
- 74 Guillaud 2006; Forestier et al. 2006.
- 75 Bellwood 1997: 187.
- 76 Bellwood et al. 1993.
- 77 Fox 1970.
- 78 Kress 2004: 272.
- 79 Mourer 1994: figure 3.
- 80 Anderson 1990: 65.
- 81 Gorman 1971.
- 82 Forestier et al. 2013.
- 83 Gorman 1970: 87–88.
- 84 Gorman 1970: 81.
- 85 Higham 2001: 128.



- 86 Higham 2001: 128.
- 87 Binford 1968.
- 88 Bray 1980.
- 89 Colani 1927: 1–60; Colani 1929: 353–384. Twenty sites were identified by Colani in 1927.
- 90 Matthews 1968: 94.
- 91 Matthews 1964; Moser 2001; Reynolds 1993; Solheim 1967a: 7; 1969: 130–131, and Golson 1972 suggested that pottery manufacture and plant domestication began with the development of the Hoabinhian technocomplex during the late Pleistocene, but this is now judged to be incorrect.
- 92 Forestier et al. 2013: 45.
- 93 Forestier 2000: 533.
- 94 Shoocongdej 2006.
- 95 Nguyen Binh 1991.
- 96 Clarke 1968: 321–357.
- 97 Gorman 1969: 673; Gorman 1970: 81, 82; Gorman 1971.
- 98 Gorman 1970: 82.
- 99 Ha Van Tan 1997; Higham 2014: 58–59.
- 100 Sharma 2010; Bowdler 1994; McCarthy 1940; Matthews 1966.
- 101 Maringer 1957: 3.
- 102 Gorman 1970: 83.
- 103 Forestier et al. 2013: 48.
- 104 Pookajorn 1990.
- 105 Bellwood 1997: 163; Nik Hassan et al. 1990; Adi and Zulkifli 1990.
- 106 Edwards McKinnon 1991; Glover 1978.
- 107 Fuller et al. 2009.
- 108 Bellwood 2008: 103 advocates 3000 BCE, but Higham 2011 suggests 2000 BCE based on the mainland Seasian data.
- 109 Bellwood 2005, quoted in Higham et al. 2011: 529–530; Bellwood and Oxenham 2008; Gray et al. 2009; Rispoli 2008; Zhang and Hung 2010.
- 110 Blust 1996.
- 111 Cameron 2002.
- 112 Bellwood 2005, 2008: 106; Higham et al. 2011: 530.
- 113 Pureepatpong 2006.
- 114 Anderson 1990; Higham et al. 2011: 532.
- 115 Barker et al. 2007.
- 116 Higham et al. 2011: 533.
- 117 O'Reilly 1998; Higham et al. 2011: 533.
- 118 Higham et al. 2011: 533.
- 119 Tayles 1999; Higham et al. 2011: 534.
- 120 Hall 1993; Moore 1993.
- 121 Higham et al. 2011: 534–535.
- 122 Higham and Higham 2009; Higham and Kijngam 2009; Higham et al. 2011: 538.
- 123 Higham 2004b; Higham et al. 2011: 538.
- 124 Higham et al. 2011: 539.
- 125 Vincent 2003; Higham et al. 2011: 539.
- 126 Hill et al. 2007.
- 127 Higham et al. 2011: 541.
- 128 Bellwood and Diamond 2005; Diamond and Bellwood 2003.
- 129 Oppenheimer 2004; Oppenheimer 2006; Higham et al. 2011.

- 130 Shuhaimi et al. 1990; Zuraina 1994; Adi and Zulkifli 1990.
- 130 Heekeren 1972.
- 131 Bellwood 1997: 196.
- 132 Aubert et al. 2014.
- 133 Bellwood 1997: 268.
- 134 Bellwood 2008: 103; Higham 2011: 230.
- 135 Solheim 1968: 62.
- 136 Solheim 1972: 36.
- 137 Gorman and Charoenwongsa 1976.
- 138 Solheim 1983.
- 139 Higham et al. 2011: 230.
- 140 Gorman and Charoenwongsa 1976; Higham 2011: 645.
- 141 White and Hamilton 2009.
- 142 Higham 1996; Higham et al. 2011. See [http://seasiabib.museum.upenn.edu:8001/pdf\\_articles/PlosOne/WhiteCommentHighamPLOSONE.pdf](http://seasiabib.museum.upenn.edu:8001/pdf_articles/PlosOne/WhiteCommentHighamPLOSONE.pdf) and [www.plosone.org/annotation/listThread.action?root=87422](http://www.plosone.org/annotation/listThread.action?root=87422) (Accessed 28 November 2015) for debate between LCM and SCM proponents, including White and Higham.
- 143 Higham and Kijngam 1984; Higham 2011: 645.
- 144 Higham and Kijngam 2009.
- 145 Higham 2011: 647.
- 146 Berstan et al. 2008; Higham 2011, 648.
- 147 White and Hamilton 2009: 357.
- 148 Pigott and Ciarla 2007; Higham et al. 2011.
- 149 Juleff 2009: 557.
- 150 Pryce et al. 2013.
- 151 Higham 2011: 650.
- 152 Pautreau 2001, 2007.
- 153 Higham 2011: 651.
- 154 Higham 2011: 651.
- 155 Bulbeck 2004: 428.
- 156 Janse 1958.
- 157 Pham 2004.
- 158 Mien 2005; Ashmore 1999; Higham 2014: 167.
- 159 Tingley 2009: 2.
- 160 Tingley 2009: 3.
- 161 Bulbeck 2004: 428–429.
- 162 Ha 1980.
- 163 Higham 2014: 200.
- 164 Bulbeck 2004: 429.
- 165 Bulbeck 2004: 429.
- 166 Cooler 1994.
- 167 Loewenstein 1956; Peacock 1964, 1979.
- 168 Bernet Kempers 1988.
- 169 Heine-Geldern 1947.
- 170 Heekeren 1958; Bintarti 1985.
- 171 I Wayan Ardika and Bellwood 1991; Reinecke 2009: 26.
- 172 Bellwood 1997: 292.
- 173 Kim 2015.
- 174 Reinecke 2009: 26.

- 175 Taylor 1983a: 20–23.
- 176 Pham 2004.
- 177 Kim, Van, and Hoang 2010: 1014.
- 178 Pham 2004.
- 179 Kim 2015.
- 180 Allard 1999; Stark 2006a: 414; Kim 2015.
- 181 Louis Malleret 1959; Williams-Hunt 1950.
- 182 Bernard Philippe Groslier 1966: 195, figures 1 and 2. Unfortunately, he never published a detailed site report for Mimot.
- 183 Dega and Latinis 2013.
- 184 Penny 2006.
- 185 Dega 2001.
- 186 Dega and Latinis 2013: 334.
- 187 Dega 2001/02:135.
- 188 Higham 2002.
- 189 Dega 2001, 2002.
- 190 Latinis and Dega 2011.
- 191 Dega 2002: 128.
- 192 Rispoli (1997: 72) inferred that the third and second millennia BC was a period of considerable cultural unity on mainland Seasia, based on the general preference for incised and impressed pottery decoration.
- 193 Latinis and Dega 2011.
- 194 Dega 2001; 2002: 73.
- 195 Malleret 1959; Moore 1989, 1995.
- 196 O'Reilly and Shewan 2015.
- 197 Lam 2009.
- 198 Evans 2007: 19.
- 199 Kijngam, Higham, and Wiriyaromp 1980; Higham and Kijngam 1984.
- 200 Higham 1998.
- 201 Moore 1988, 1992.
- 202 C.F.W. Higham 2007.
- 203 Welch and McNeill 1991.
- 204 Kijngam, Higham, and Wiriyaromp 1980: 80.
- 205 Charantiyakarn 1984.
- 206 Dewar 1991.
- 207 Crumley 1976; Haggett 1966.
- 208 R. McC. Adams 1981: 74.
- 209 Flannery 1971.
- 210 C.F.W. Higham 1984.
- 211 Glover 1972: 157.
- 212 Ibid.: pp. 159, 161.
- 213 Moore 1988.
- 214 Moore 1988.
- 215 Williams-Hunt 1950.
- 216 Higham and Kijngam 1984.
- 217 Welch and McNeill 1991.
- 218 Mudar 1993.
- 219 Vickery 1998; Moore 1988: 115–116.
- 220 O'Reilly 2014.

- 221 O'Reilly 2000, 2003; White 1995.
- 222 Bayard 1972.
- 223 Higham and Thosarat 1998: 111.
- 224 Higham and Kijngam 1984.
- 225 Higham 1996.
- 226 Higham, Thosarat, and O'Reilly 2004.
- 227 Higham 2004a.
- 228 Higham and Kijngam 2012.
- 229 Higham 2009: 245.
- 230 Ibid.: p. 246.
- 231 Ibid.: p. 248.
- 232 Moore 1992.
- 233 Higham and Kijngam 1984.
- 234 Indrawooth et al. 1990.
- 235 Ibid.: pp. 580–581.
- 236 Higham and Thosarat 2007: 78.
- 237 Vickery 1998: 308.
- 238 Talbot 2007: 349.
- 239 Chang 2007.
- 240 O'Reilly 2014.
- 241 Habberfield-Short and Boyd 2005.
- 242 O'Reilly 2007: 546.
- 243 O'Reilly 2007: 578; Nitta 1991.
- 244 O'Reilly 2007: 558.
- 245 Ibid.: pp. 581–582.
- 246 Boyd 2007: 38.
- 247 Boyd and Habberfield-Short 2007.
- 248 “The conclusion reached in this study is that the surficial moats which have drawn so much attention to these sites largely represent modern landscape processes, in which residual geomorphological features from a former alluvial system provided optimal rice-growing conditions and thus attracted the urge to tidy landscape. . . . The buried channels, however, were probably not constructed . . . but represent stream and river channels of various types.” Boyd et al. 1999: 177.
- 249 Higham and Thosarat 1998: 94; Natapintu 1988.
- 250 Carter 2013: 56–57.
- 251 Bennett 1989; Higham and Thosarat 1998: 94–99; White and Pigott 1996; Natapintu 1988.
- 252 Lertcharnrit 2014.
- 253 Higham and Thosarat 2006.
- 254 Welch 1985.
- 255 T.F.G. Higham 2005.
- 256 Higham and Kijngam 2013.
- 257 Higham and Kijngam 2012: 531.
- 258 Welch and McNeill 1991.
- 259 O'Reilly 2000: 14; Muhly 1988: 16.
- 260 Pryce, Bellina-Pryce, and Bennett 2008: 302–303; Glover and Bellina 2011: 34–35; Glover 1989: 40; Glover and Jahan 2014.
- 261 Theunissen 2007: 362.
- 262 Theunissen 2007.
- 263 Saitowitz and Reid 2007.

- 264 Nitta 1997.
- 265 Higham and Parker 1970.
- 266 Glover 1989: 36; 1989: 47–48.
- 267 Bronson 1990: 227; Wheatley 1983: 294–295.
- 268 Higham 1989: 308–315.
- 269 Bellwood and Koon 1989.
- 270 This was discussed by such authors as Wheatley 1983: 285; Glover 1979, who described “a network of inter-regional trade throughout the archipelago, and linking Indonesia to the mainland” as existing in late prehistory; Shorto 1979: 274, who interpreted early epigraphy on mainland Seasia as proof of “a fair degree of commerce” between mainland and insular Seasia; Jean Kennedy 1977: 32, and Hutterer 1977b.
- 271 Hutterer 1977b: 185.
- 272 Peacock 1979: 212–213.
- 273 Caldwell 1964, Hirth 1978.
- 274 Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 284–294.
- 275 Boonyarit Chaisuwan 2011.
- 276 Adi Haji Taha 1991.
- 277 Wheatley 1961: 8–13.
- 278 Bellina and Silapanth 2006b: 268.
- 279 Hung et al. 2007; Hung and Bellwood 2010.
- 280 Bellina et al. 2014: 76.
- 281 Glover and Jahan 2014.
- 282 Bouvet 2008, 2011.
- 283 I Wayan Ardika 2011; I Wayan Ardika and Bellwood 1991; I Wayan Ardika et al. 1997.
- 284 Bouvet 2011: 74.
- 285 Pryce et al. 2008: 311.
- 286 Bellina et al. 2014: 78.
- 287 Boonyarit 2011. Bellina et al. 2014 note the existence of only three sites: Bang Kluai Nok, the largest, and two small ones, Bang Khlak 1 and 2, are now destroyed.
- 288 Bellina et al. 2014: 81.
- 289 Boonyarit 2011: 87.
- 290 Wicks 1992: 117.
- 291 Bellina et al. 2014: 84.
- 292 Ibid.: p. 86.
- 293 Evans 1932: plate 28; Tan 2003: plates IV-11, IV-14, and IV-15.
- 294 Evans 1927, 1928a, 1928b, 1932.
- 295 Adi Haji Taha (1991), Nik Hassan Shuhaimi bin Nik Abdul Rahman 2011.
- 296 Glover 1989, 1996; Glover and Bellina 2011.
- 297 Glover and Bellina 2011: 34–35.
- 298 Theunissen, Grave, and Bailey 2000.
- 299 Glover and Bellina 2011: 36.
- 300 Glover and Jahan 2014.
- 301 Ha 1980: 133.
- 302 Bacus 2004a.
- 303 Tingley 2009: 3–4; Loofs-Wissowa 1980–81.
- 304 Higham 2014: 211.
- 305 Tingley 2009: 3.
- 306 Lam 2011; Higham 2014: 212.
- 307 Tingley 2009: 4.

- 308 Yamagata et al. 2001.
- 309 Reinecke 2009.
- 310 Pham Thi Ninh 2000.
- 311 Pham Thi Ninh 2005.
- 312 Ha 1980: 136–137; Fontaine 1980; Nguyen Duy Ty 1991.
- 313 Nguyen Kim Dung 1995.
- 314 Ha 1996: 135–156.
- 315 Nguyen, Glover, and Yamagata 2006: 232–244.
- 316 Nguyen, Glover, and Yamagata 2006: 216–231.
- 317 Solheim 1967b.
- 318 On Lapita archaeology, see Spriggs 2000; Daud Aris Tanudirjo 2004; Noury 2013.
- 319 Tingley 2009: 4; Glover 1989: 22; Glover and Syme 1993: 54.
- 320 Hung et al. 2007: 19745.
- 321 Hung et al. 2007, 2013.
- 322 Hung et al. 2007: 19749.
- 323 Reinecke 2009: 26.
- 324 Hung et al. 2007: 19745.
- 325 Solheim 2000: 273.
- 326 Ardika 1995; Ardika and Bellwood 1991.
- 327 Glover 1996b: 67; Glover and Yamagata 1995: 156; analysis by Prior 1998 confirmed that the sherd was mineralogically indistinguishable from sherds from Arikamedu, south India, where Greco-Roman traders were present.
- 328 Ardika 2008: 152.
- 329 McLauchlan and Thomas 2006; Lansing et al. 2004, 2006.
- 330 Vogel 1918; Chhabra 1965.
- 331 Wheatley 1973: 44.
- 332 Bosch 1925; illustrated in Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art*, p. 49 and plate 97. It was heavily damaged in the fire in the Paris exhibition of 1931.
- 333 Dupont 1959.
- 334 Bosch 1933: photo opposite page 511; Dupont 1959.



# 4

## PROTOCLASSIC

1 to 600 CE

The term “Protoclassic” calls attention to the nature of the sources which become available at this time, and their fragmentary nature. Whereas for the period older than 2,000 years we are limited to artifacts and evidence of ritual behavior expressed in burials, at the beginning of the Common Era we begin to obtain written sources. The first verbal accounts of Seasia come from foreign sources which have been rewritten during subsequent centuries, so that they are difficult to interpret. Between 2,000 and 1,400 years ago some sources written by Seasians come available, but only in the seventh century CE is there enough of it to yield a glimmer of Seasian thought. The first six centuries of the Common Era are marked by the appropriation of icons imported from India. The first statues and architectural forms were imported relatively intact, but by the seventh century Seasians began to make these icons their own; they discovered how to use imported script, language, and iconography to express local ideas which retained their coherence and became more clearly defined by linguistic and artistic vocabulary from India.

During the Protoclassic we obtain more information about trade, urbanization, and politics in Seasia. These cultural subsystems were already complex in the Preclassic. Data from the Protoclassic portrays a picture of intensification of existing systems rather than a revolution caused by the introduction of new ways of making cultural statements about the meaning of life and proper behavior as a member of society. Contact with India had already begun; importation of symbolic devices at this period merely enriched what already existed. Trade, technology, and settlement formed during the Preclassic become more reticulated and hierarchical, but it is possible to trace continuous evolution at sites which formed in the Preclassic and continued into the Classic.

There is one major exception to this story of continuity, but the disruption there was not connected with India. This is north Vietnam, where the cause of the change is invasion from China. This occurred in the late Preclassic; during the Protoclassic, Chinese cultural elements become more entrenched in north Vietnam.

## HISTORICAL SOURCES

It is ironic and illuminating that the first foreign source to give a detailed account of Seasia comes not from India or China, but from Egypt, probably the port of Berenice Troglodytica on the Red Sea. Archaeologists working there have recovered evidence of trade with India, including black pepper, Indian pottery, and a graffito in Tamil Brahmi script.<sup>1</sup> A writer whose name has been lost lived there in the time of Emperor Nero (54–68 CE) or Vespasian (69–79 CE). He was probably a merchant; his writing style was unsophisticated, and he made grammatical errors.

He wrote a work in Greek called the *Sailor's Guide to the Red Sea* (*Periplous tos Erythras Thalassos*). The oldest surviving copy dates from the tenth century. It mentions a sailor named Hipalos who discovered the secret of the monsoons, enabling ships to sail safely to India. He wrote his text to explain the trading system in the Indian Ocean, where there were ports designated as *emporia nomima*, places where foreigners were allowed to trade on payment of stipulated fees.<sup>2</sup>

About 100 years later another book about the Indian Ocean was written in Egypt, this time in Alexandria by a Greek cosmographer, Klaudios Ptolemaios. He seems to have been a serious scholar but was not well known in his own time, around 150 CE. He was acquainted with the work of Marinus of Tyre, in modern Lebanon, perhaps a Phoenician who had detailed knowledge of trade in the Indian Ocean. Ptolemaios was not interested in trade; his research concerned mathematics, astronomy, and map-making. He did, however, write instructions for making a map of the area from the Canary Islands to China, entitled *Geographike Hyphegesis* ("Geographical Guidance"). He had good data about the Mediterranean, northeast Africa, the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and the coast of Asia from Arabia all the way to north Vietnam. He knew the Indian Ocean better than northern Europe<sup>3</sup> and almost nothing about China or the overland Silk Road.

The version which survives gives the latitude and longitude of 8,000 places. We do not know how closely the oldest known versions of Ptolemaios's work, which were copied about 700 years ago, conform to his original version. The original version was translated from Greek into Arabic, back into Greek, then into Latin. Translators may have made mistakes; possibly some information was added during the period between 150 and 1400 CE.

Ptolemaios thought of Seasia as *Extra Gangem Indica*, "India beyond the Ganges".<sup>4</sup> In Seasia he knew of 42 cities: 30 *polis* ("city"); six *emporion* (official trading ports; five of these were west of or in the *Aurea Chersonesus*, "Golden Peninsula", or Siam-Malay Peninsula, one east of it); five *metropoleis*, or chief cities of territories (one west of the *Aurea Chersonesus*, three to the east, and one in an archipelago south of the mainland); and one *basileion*, or royal city (in Myanmar). He exaggerated the length of the Rakhine coast.

On the west coast of the *Aurea Chersonesus* are five ports, then a promontory, obviously a useful landmark for sailors. Next is the city of Takola, which appears in Indian texts composed in the second or third centuries CE, and in the eleventh-century Indian inscription. After another promontory is the Krysoanas River, probably the Muar River in the southwestern part of peninsular Malaysia. Konkonagara, in the center of the peninsula, is interesting because it includes the Sanskrit *nagara*, royal city or complex.

At the southern tip of the peninsula is Sabara Emporion, in the vicinity of modern Singapore; near it is the Palanda River leading to Palanda, which corresponds quite closely to the modern Johor River and Kota Tinggi. South of the Aurea Chersonnesus are *Sabadibae* and *Iabadium*, groups of islands which correspond to Sumatra and Java.

The label *Malaei coli prom* at the southeast corner of the peninsula is intriguing because it seems to denote “Malay Point”. Next comes Attabas, on the southeast coast; Kole Polis, around modern Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia; Perimula, modern Kelantan; Sambra; Bakonga, in the interior; and Sambra, on the coast near modern Bangkok.

On what corresponds to the east coast of Thailand and south Cambodia are Pagrasa, then the Sobanus River, shown as very long, reaching to a mountain range about where the Himalayas should be. This may be the Mekong. Several more towns then appear: Catharta, Sinda, Thipinobasti, Acadra, and Zaba. Next we come to another promontory, now called Ca Mau Peninsula at the southeast tip of Vietnam. Along the Vietnamese coast are Thagora, Balonga, and Throana, north of which the Daoanas River enters the *Magnus Sinus* (“Great Bay”, the South China Sea). Several more ports appear, then Aganagora (possibly another *nagara*), and the Serus River, about where the northeast coast of Vietnam bends eastward to China. Just east of this river is the text *Magni sinus initium*, “Here the Great Bay Begins”. Beyond another river is the caption “Fish eaters of China”, and a town, Thina.

After Ptolemaios, the veil of ignorance descended. It would be 1,400 years before Europe was able to match his knowledge of Seasia. Meanwhile, the Chinese were beginning to acquire their first information about the region. Their records are the only objective foreign descriptions of Classic Seasia.

## GEOMORPHOLOGY AND HISTORY

It has been speculated that the deltas of several large rivers, including the Chao Phraya and the Musi, were open sea during the Protoclassic.<sup>5</sup> This assumption has been used to explain the absence of sites in the deltas. Recent research has shown that this is wrong. The last mangrove at Bangkok disappeared between 2,000 and 2,700 years ago. Ban Non Song, 5 kilometers from the ocean at Samut Sakhon, was inhabited 2,500 years ago.<sup>6</sup> In southeast Sumatra, the sites of Karang Agung and Air Sugihan, both within 10 kilometers of the seacoast, were inhabited by the third or fourth centuries.<sup>7</sup>

The mangrove swamps of Seasia now are sparsely populated, but they were not uninhabitable. People lived in the mangroves in the nineteenth century; many have been officially resettled in the past 100 years. The mangroves are ideal habitats for a certain type of hunter-gatherer-forager adaptation. The Marsh Arabs of southern Iraq provide an example of a similar adaptation in the delta of the Tigris-Euphrates Rivers which has existed for millennia. However, archaeological traces of their existence are difficult to find. No archaeological research has been designed to look for such sites. The coastlines of the major river deltas of Seasia in the Protoclassic were not very far from their modern locations.

## SETTLEMENT PATTERNS: DENDRITIC AND CENTRAL PLACE MODELS

According to an influential model proposed in 1977, settlement patterns and the distribution of political and economic power in important trading kingdoms along the river valleys of southeast Sumatra were determined by the drainage. The centers of power were located at the river mouths; the hierarchy of power and affluence was correlated with locations at various points along the river systems. The higher upstream a settlement was located, the lower its position in the hierarchy. This “upstream-downstream” model<sup>8</sup> has become accepted as a model for locational analysis in these important areas, but it has many flaws.<sup>9</sup> The principal ports in the two river valleys which the model was designed to analyze, the Musi and Batanghari, are not at the downstream ends of the rivers; they are between 90 and 120 kilometers inland. Transport routes in southeast Sumatra are not confined to the rivers; there is historical and archaeological evidence of overland routes between the headwaters of the river, along the foothills across the watersheds, and across the island of Sumatra.<sup>10</sup> This environmental determinism is partly predicated on the assumption that the subordination of the highlands of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula to the lowland population which existed in the nineteenth century has been a permanent feature of the landscape. This is also incorrect.

The next part of this book describes the period when north Vietnam was a part of China, or was ruled by one of the kingdoms into which China was divided after the fall of the Han Dynasty in 220 CE. The end of the Protoclassic period coincides with the reunification of China, first under the short-lived Sui, and then under the Tang. Chinese influence on the Vietnamese elite was strong, but local identity survived. This is followed by a section which introduces a vast subject, contact with South Asia, many details of which are still unclear. This subject was dealt with briefly in the previous chapter, but the effects of this contact only began to exert important influence on Seasian culture in the Protoclassic. Various theories have been advanced to explain the reasons for the profound effects of this cultural interaction, which marked almost the entire Classic period of Seasia. Topics dealt with here include the probable actors on both sides of the Bay of Bengal; the historiography of early Seasia in Indian sources; and the appeal of Sanskritic culture for what had been a divided region. Writing and religion provided a common set of symbols for this vast area and thus afforded the means for more effective and intensive interaction, commercial and intellectual.

Although the term “Classic” is not normally used in reference to India, “the development of a coherent model of political, social and religious integration [is] most prominently associated with the Gupta dynasty”.<sup>11</sup> The evolution of a unified center of politics, culture, and art in the Gupta period coincides so closely with the appearance of similar cultural manifestations in Seasia that it is logical to assume that Seasians found intellectual satisfaction in appropriating the same framework which they could clearly observe during their frequent trading voyages there. There was no discernible time lag between appearance of artistic and literary elements in India and those areas of Seasia most closely in communication with Indian ports.<sup>12</sup>

## RELATIONS BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM

Probably Buddhism and Hinduism entered Seasia simultaneously, together with the idea of carving statuary as portraits, either of humans or of gods. Preclassic statuary of Pasemah (highland South Sumatra)

may have been intended to symbolize a particular heroic figure. It is probable that Preclassic Seasians carved effigies of the spirits of the ancestors, similar to those among the modern Toraja of Sulawesi. These effigies did not have features intended to represent specific individuals (although this tradition has recently changed in Sulawesi). The oldest inscriptions in Indonesia do not mention any god; they reflect Hinduism of the Vedic, non-devotional form.

There is no record of violence between adherents of Hinduism and Buddhism in Seasia. Priests no doubt saw each other as rivals, but the general population does not seem to have been concerned with doctrinal differences between them. Some inscriptions hint at syncretism, but the kings maintained separate spaces for the Buddhists, Hindus, and a third stream of faith which was mainly concerned with asceticism in remote mountains.

Siddhartha Gautama, a prince of the Sakya clan born in what is now Nepal, became known as the Buddha. He developed doctrines which allowed ordinary people a chance to attain enlightenment regardless of their station in life. His teachings spread throughout Asia after his death sometime around 486 BCE. During the Protoclassic period, statues mainly depict Sakyamuni Buddha. Interest in other Buddhist deities does not seem to have arisen until the Early Classic period. The terms “Theravada”, “Hinayana”, and “Mahayana” are often used as though they referred to rival factions or schools of thought. In fact, Buddhists have not traditionally classified themselves according to these labels<sup>13</sup> (although there has been some tendency on the part of those who follow more esoteric practices to compare themselves favourably with those who do not; the difference lies in the emphasis on the efficacy of appealing to supernatural beings in order to reach enlightenment quickly).

There are some important differences between Buddhism and Hinduism, besides the different deities worshipped. Buddhism is more institutionalized: monastic communities have existed from the foundation of the faith (not everyone would call it a “religion”), and the *sangha*, or organization of monks, is one of the three jewels of the movement. Adherents of esoteric Buddhism pay less attention to the sangha, since their philosophy encourages them to use individualistic practices to achieve enlightenment. Buddhism’s spread in Seasia was due more to the development of lay believers who wanted to achieve a better birth in the next life than to monks and nuns who wished to attain enlightenment, or at least reincarnation on a higher plane.

No such formal organizations are called for in Brahminical belief, though some have formed from time to time. The spread of Brahminical religion has been restricted because some (though not all) philosophers believe that Brahmins irrevocably lose their status if they travel abroad. In Buddhism, by contrast, sea travel is dignified by the belief that in one of his incarnations Sakyamuni Buddha was employed as a ship’s pilot.

Buddhism found numerous adherents among Seasian women. At least one Javanese queen retired to a nunnery, leaving her kingdom to be ruled by her prime minister.

It has long been assumed that the original form of Hinduism which spread to Seasia was focused on the worship of Siva. This idea was partly due to the prominence of Siva worship in Angkor, and partly to the idea that the main icon of Siva, the lingga, was congruent with prehistoric worship of megaliths. Siva, literally “auspicious”, is not reincarnated in different avatars, unlike Visnu or Buddha, but has one immortal form. Siva is particularly associated with asceticism. Śaivite priests are normally from lower castes than the Brahmins. Siva is not the hero of any major epics. His literature is mainly written

in Sanskrit and Tamil, and he is mainly worshipped in south India. He is believed to live on Mount Kailasa with his wife, Parvati. His son Skanda (Kartikkeya), god of war, who rides a peacock, was less popular in Seasia than his other son, Ganesa.

Recent research has shown that Visnu was also popular in Seasia. A considerable number of Visnu statues have been found in the Mekong Delta, the Isthmus of Kra, Sumatra, and Java, which probably mirrors a sphere of commercial interaction.<sup>14</sup> Visnu was incarnated in 10 forms in order to save the world: a fish, tortoise, boar, a lion, a dwarf, Parasurama, Rama, Krisna, Buddha, and Kalkin (a man riding a horse, heralding the destruction of the present era). Some images show him with a horse's head. In Indonesia, only statues of the third, fourth, fifth, seventh, and eighth incarnations have been found. Visnu enjoyed the patronage of many Seasian rulers. In the twelfth century, Visnu worship revived in India; the important twelfth-century ruler of Angkor (Suryavarman II) and the kings of Java were devotees of Visnu.

The next section deals with early trading centers in the isthmian area of the Siam-Malay Peninsula and the lower Mekong. The Sassanid Empire formed in the third century in the Near East, and quickly became known to the Chinese as the *Posu*; their incense and herbal remedies were in great demand in China. By the early sixth century Persians had established regular communication with Sri Lanka; they received large supplies of silk and possibly other commodities in exchange for their wares. According to one theory, the people of Sumatra soon figured out a way to insert their own pharmacopoeia into the trade.<sup>15</sup> Probably the Sumatrans were the owners and crew of the ships which carried the trade goods between the two ends of Asia.

The Chinese of the Protoclassic referred to Seasians whom they met as *Kunlun*. These were probably islanders since the Chinese were not travelling to Seasia; they expected foreigners to come to them. The term Kunlun denoted a form of writing, a language, and people who were either merchants or pirates (or both). In India, the Sanskrit word *dwipantara* may have had the same connotation. The *Hanshu*, a Chinese text of this period, states that sailing "the trading ships [ . . . ] is a profitable business [for the barbarians], who also loot and kill".<sup>16</sup>

The next sections deal with Funan, the first Seasian kingdom beyond Vietnam which attracted Chinese attention and respect. We have Chinese descriptions of diplomatic and cultural exchange between the two countries. We also have evidence of diplomatic and cultural interaction between Funan and Indian kingdoms, but this information also comes from Chinese sources rather than the two parties involved. Funan was the first major Seasian kingdom to become a major center of maritime trade. Archaeological data has been gradually accumulating which provides a clearer context in which to view the Chinese accounts. The oldest Seasian written text comes from a location north of the Mekong Delta. The Vocanh inscription has no date; experts have to estimate its age (believed to be third century CE) from the script style.<sup>17</sup> The competing centers which composed the mandala of Champa for the next 1,500 years began to appear in history at this period at sites such as Tra Kieu.

Archaeological data from this area is relatively plentiful in northeast Thailand compared with other parts of Seasia. Non Muang Khao, which had been settled in the late Preclassic, yielded burial offerings of imported items, including agate, carnelian, and glass, and black burnished pottery.<sup>18</sup> The Noen U-Loke site, founded around 400 BCE, was inhabited until 500 CE. The population had contact



with a long-distance trade network, and worked bronze and iron, but subsisted on rice and cattle. At Muang Sema, two sites previously thought to have been moated enclosures but now perhaps properly regarded as open habitation sites, an early phase appeared characterized by carinated and incised bowls which indicates a possible relationship with Dvaravati in central Thailand. In the Phi-mai area, which later became a major Khmer center of power, important Khmer temples, including Prasat Phanom Wan and Phanom Rung, have been found to stand on top of Protoclassic or Preclassic graves.<sup>19</sup>

In central Thailand, the renowned variability of Preclassic cultures continues to exhibit itself in the variety of local motifs in pottery and bronze, but two main orientations or patterns gradually emerged in new media. Overland communication was already important in the Preclassic period, as demonstrated by the distribution of imported glass and stone ornaments; in the Protoclassic, some general art styles began to appear,<sup>20</sup> which may indicate competition between elites in various sites to claim the role of *cakravartin*, or overlord, in wider mandalas.

Settlements with ramparts like those of Thailand and Cambodia began to appear in the Ayeyarwadi plain of central Myanmar in the Protoclassic, if not before. Little excavation has yet been carried out which would enable us to resolve the question of the dates of the first large settlements there. There were several important settlements of the same scale as those in Thailand and Cambodia, with brick structures which still stand as some of the oldest preserved buildings in Seasia (Figure 4.1).

The name Yavadvipa ("Barley Island" in Sanskrit) appeared in Indian literature in the Preclassic as a remote location where Rama sought his beloved Sita. Iabadiou in the *Geography* ascribed to Klaudios Ptolemaios seems to be the same island. Early contact with India is verified by the discovery of Indian-made pottery in the northwestern coastal region of Java, which can be typologically dated to the beginning of the Protoclassic period. By the fifth century Java was sending ambassadors to China. This information coincides with the earliest inscriptions in Java which mention a kingdom called Târumâ and a king named Purnavarman, who was a devotee of Visnu.

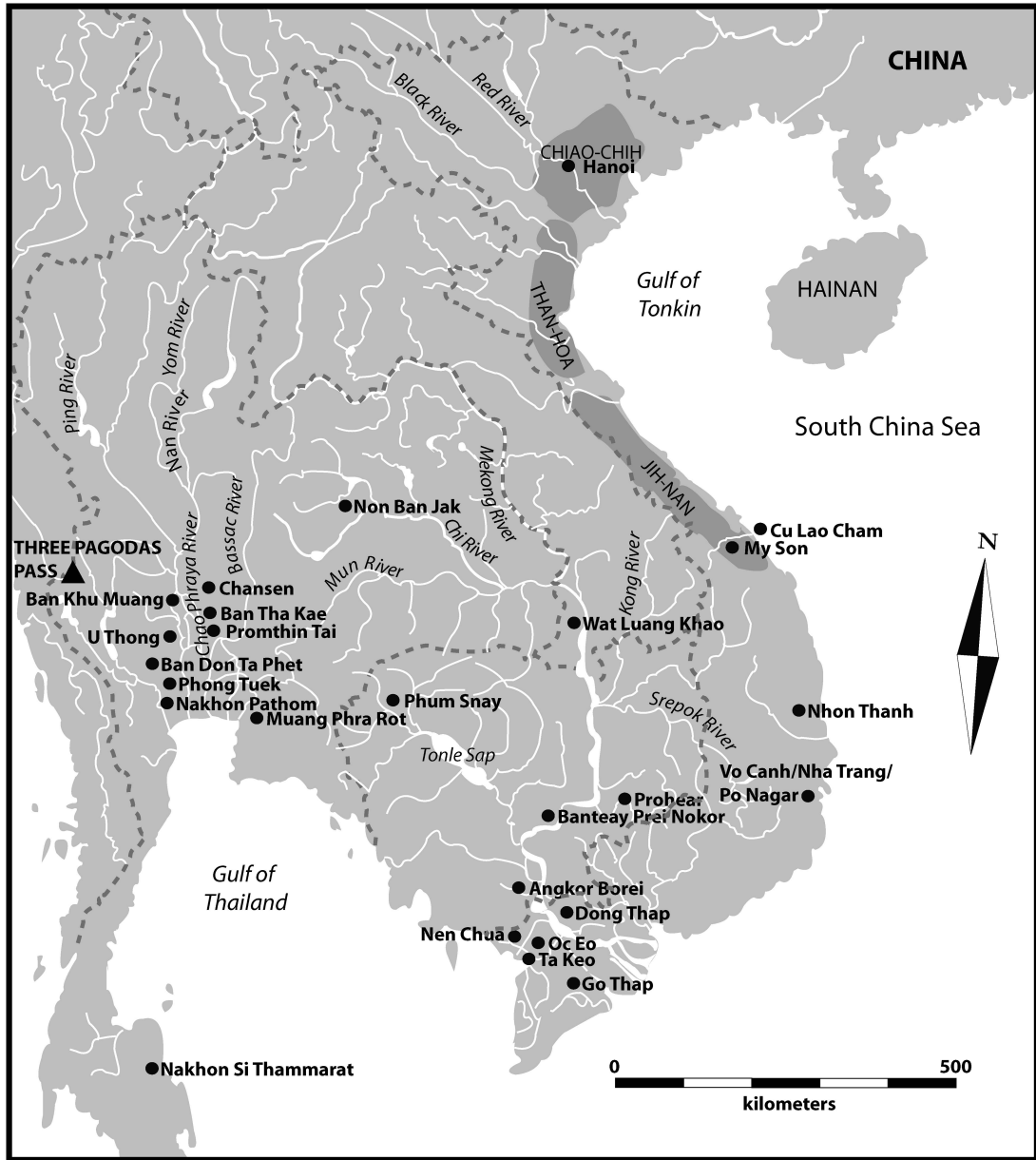
Recent discoveries in southeast Sumatra have yielded the first archaeological evidence of sophisticated settlements connected to a maritime trading network by the fourth century, if not earlier. By the third century, the Chinese had heard of a kingdom which they called Gantoli which probably lay somewhere along the coast in the vicinity of the Musi River.

One of the most important kingdoms and trading ports of the Protoclassic was Kedah, on the west coast of the Siam-Malay Peninsula south of the Isthmus of Kra. The oldest Buddhist inscriptions of Seasia have been found here, together with remains of brick structures which may date from this era.

The island of Bali was not known as a major trading destination during the Classic period, but remains of a major Protoclassic port have been found on the island's northern coast. Not only have remains of Indian pottery been discovered there, but also DNA analysis of a skeleton from a burial indicates that the deceased had probably come from India. This is the first evidence that Indians had visited the eastern part of the archipelago at such an early date.

Another important outpost of early contact with India is found on the eastern coastal plain of Borneo (Kalimantan). No fewer than seven *yupa* inscriptions have been found at this site, indicating the presence of a kingdom in an area which has never been closely associated with historic trading networks.





**Figure 4.1** Protoclassic sites of mainland Seasia

Archaeological research here, however, demonstrates that the Kutai area was part of the Sanskrit interaction sphere throughout the Classic period. This situation is excellent proof of the importance of using archaeological material in addition to written texts to understand the origins and development of Classic culture in Seasia.

## NAN YUE AND SINIFICATION

There are six “historical-cultural regions” in Vietnam. Three are core lowland regions which were inhabited by the original “Viet” peoples who identified themselves as “Kinh” and speak an Austroasiatic language;<sup>21</sup> the central coastal stretch of land inhabited by the Cham; and Khmer who live in the Mekong Delta. The remaining three comprise highland areas occupied by diverse ethnic groups: Viet Bac between the Red River valley delta and Guangxi Province, China; Tay Bac, which shares borders with Yunnan and northeastern Laos; and Tay Nguyen, or the central highlands consisting of the Truong Son mountain chain bordering central and south Laos and northeast Cambodia.<sup>22</sup>

The three core lowland regions yield the most information. The highlands probably played important roles where commercial and other cultural exchanges occurred, but their composition of largely diverse populations who speak a wide range of languages limits academic studies of the ancient origins of these peoples. Highland societies are predominantly oral and committed little of their histories to writing. In Myanmar, highland groups such as the Karens did not commit their language to writing until the nineteenth century when Karen monks or Christian missionaries developed orthographies for them. A legend states that the Karens originally had a writing system which their high god Ywa gave them, but they lost it. One day their writing system would be returned when the Karens’ White Brother returned with the Gold Book.<sup>23</sup> This has been used to explain how Christianity appealed to the Sgaw Karen. Archaeology is the only source of information for the parts these peoples played in Vietnam’s ancient past.

Among the three lowland regions, the area around the Red River Delta where the Kinh or Vietnamese originated forms the basis for understanding ancient Vietnam. The Vietnamese see themselves as descendants of two ancestors: Lac Long Quan, who was a foreign prince from the sea, and Au Co, an indigenous princess from the mountains.<sup>24</sup> According to Vietnamese legend, their descendants were 18 Hung kings who established their realm in Van Lang (Phu Tho). Van Lang is located in a fertile plain at the confluence of the Red River and the Da and Chay Rivers.<sup>25</sup> The rice fields on this plain were called Lac; the regional ruling elite, the Lac lords, formed a reciprocal relationship with the Hung kings. The earliest known reference to Hung kings is found in a fifth-century CE text.<sup>26</sup>

## AU LAC

During the second half of the third century BCE, a general fleeing Qin Shi Huang’s forces defeated the last Hung king and assumed the title King An Duong Vuong. He founded the kingdom of Au Lac,<sup>27</sup> named after the Au people who came with him, and the Lac people, who were rice growers in the Red River plain.<sup>28</sup> Maspero postulated that northern Vietnamese society of this period was already hierarchically organized, with hereditary leadership, reciprocity, and loyalty to individual rulers.<sup>29</sup>

The early Chinese accounts of northern Vietnam are closely linked to Nan Yue (pronounced Nam Viet in Vietnamese), a region stretching from Guangzhou to the Red River Delta area. It was named after a sixth- to fourth-century BCE polity named Yue in what is now Zhejiang Province.<sup>30</sup> During the Warring States period (circa 475–221 BCE), the Yue ruling elite moved farther south and established

small kingdoms known as the Hundred Yue. Nan Yue was the largest of four clusters of polities which included Min Yue in Fujian, Eastern Wu in southern Zhejiang, and Western Wu centered in Guangxi.<sup>31</sup> Vietnamese Au is probably derived from Chinese Wu, an allusion to the Wu dynasty. King An Duong was probably a scion of the Wu line of kings. Like other examples in Protoclassic Southeast Asia, the Au married the indigenous elite and produced a new class of overlords.

They established their centers in Tay Vu, 15 kilometers northwest of Hanoi, where they constructed a large citadel now called Co Loa Thanh (“Old Snail Citadel”).<sup>32</sup> The settlement’s concentric walls resemble a snail’s shell; it had an outer embankment covering 600 hectares. Archaeological research at Co Loa recovered ceramics, bronze objects including a large Dong Son drum, and evidence of local bronze-casting workshops (such as a crucible containing 12 kilograms of molten bronze). Intricate designs on containers include images of plumed warriors and animals similar to those found on the tympana of some Dong Son drums. Weapons include personal items such as swords, halberds, and daggers, one adorned with a pair of stylized dragons.<sup>33</sup> Pottery was produced locally. Excavations also yielded fragments of perishable materials such as wooden coffin covers, leathers, mats, baskets, cloth, and lacquer.

## NAN YUE

During the third century BCE the Qin dynasty expanded under China’s first emperor, Qin Shi Huang (reigned 221–210 BCE) into the kingdom of Nan Yue, where one of the targets was an important coastal seaport. Zhao To (Trieu Da in Vietnamese) was the senior commanding officer of the Qin army. Following the demise of the Qin dynasty, Zhao To seized control of Guangzhou and extended his territory to the south of the Red River.

In 196 BCE, the Han dynasty recognized Zhao To’s Nan Yue as a vassal. Fearing Nan Yue’s growing strength, China forbade sale of iron, gold, weapons, horses, and cattle to Nan Yue in 185 BCE; Zhao To retaliated by seizing control of two Han provinces and declaring himself an emperor. Empress Lu sent troops to attack Zhao To, but the expedition was unsuccessful because of a cholera epidemic.<sup>34</sup> A struggle between Zhao To and An Duong over the region ended with Zhao To’s control over Au Lac and other Yue territories. Following his capture of Au Lac, Zhao To divided it into two prefectures: Giao Chi (Red River plain) and Cuu Chan (Ma and Ca River plains). The Portuguese later rendered Cuu Chan as “Cochin” whereby the area was later referred to as Cochin China. A Han expedition was launched during Emperor Han Wudi’s reign in 111 BCE. The five armies led by Han General Lu Bode were met by two Nan Yue legates at the Giao Chi border; the two men offered Nan Yue’s acceptance of Han China’s overlordship and provided the invading army with 100 cattle, 1,000 measures of wine, and tokens of submission such as population registers.<sup>35</sup>

As part of the “southern pacification” of the non-Chinese, especially the Hundred Yue, the Han reorganized Nan Yue into seven prefectures, retaining the center at Guangzhou.<sup>36</sup> The population of northern Vietnam was larger than that of southern China. An imperial census taken in 2 CE stated that

there were 981,755 persons living in the three prefectures of Giao Chi, Cuu Chan, and Nhat Nam compared to 390,555 persons in Guangxi and Guangdong. The Han also set up two new outposts which functioned as frontier garrisons. The influence of Han officials in most parts of Nan Yue was limited to a few imperial outposts until the first century CE. Han imperial officials in Nan Yue generally pursued a policy of peaceful relations with the indigenous population. They focused on their administrative roles in their prefectural headquarters and garrisons, and checked that the river routes were secure. The Han system of government could not have deviated farther from the patron-client relationship which shaped the relationship between the indigenous lords and their peoples.

One area in which the Chinese and Lac lords clashed was in land inheritance. The Chinese followed a patriarchal system whereby land was passed down through the male line and belonged to individuals and their families. The Lac practice was based on a matriarchal system whereby inheritance was passed down to future generations through female members, and land was for communal usage, not personal. These differences resulted in altercations between the Han bureaucrats and the local Lac lords.

Uprisings in northern China between 9 and 23 CE resulted in massive influxes into southern China and northern Vietnam of Han loyalists who fled regional rebelling against the Han. Some were talented men who were able to maintain order in the prefectures. Most of these officials returned north following the restoration of the Han dynasty, except for a few who remained in northern Vietnam.<sup>37</sup> A number of these officials were corrupt and ineffectual.<sup>38</sup> Lac lords began to challenge the government of one of the officials, whose name was Su Ting. One was the husband of Trung Trac, one of the famous Trung sisters, recorded for posterity in Vietnamese history as heroines who defended Vietnam against foreign oppression.<sup>39</sup> The Trung sisters were appropriated for later nationalist accounts which projected the Vietnamese “nation” back into the Han period. Trung Trac and Trung Nhi, daughters of the Lac lord of Me Linh, led a rebellion against the Chinese. The significance of matriarchal leadership in this account is evident: Chinese sources state that Thi Sach followed his wife’s leadership, and Trung Trac established a royal court at Me Linh and ruled as a queen.<sup>40</sup> The uprisings overran the Han settlements and garrisons in 40 CE and the Trung sisters governed settlements in Giao Chi, Cuu Chan, Nhat Nam, and a prefecture on the north coast.

The uprisings were stimulated by Han taxation of agricultural surplus and other local commodities, and their control of the markets. Taylor suggested that the Han records’ statement that Trung Trac “adjusted” the taxes should be interpreted as “abolished”. The taxes were tribute exactions which the Han administration demanded of the Lac lords; these were corvée labour, taxes on tropical luxury products, for instance, oranges. Rather than tax collection, under the Trung sisters’ rule, gifts were exchanged through patron-client reciprocal relationships.

The Trung sisters’ rule did not last long. In 42 CE, General Ma Yuan entered the Red River plain. The sisters were captured and beheaded.<sup>41</sup> Most of the Lac lords submitted to the Chinese. Those who continued to resist were tracked down and killed. Many members of the Lac clans were sent to the north to build fortified towns and man garrisons, and conscripted into the Chinese army. In 44 CE, Ma Yuan imposed direct imperial rule over northern Vietnam, signaling the end of the Lac lords and the beginning of intense Chinese influence in northern Vietnam.

## SINIFICATION OF NORTHERN VIETNAM

From the first to the tenth centuries, Chinese influence permeated all aspects of Vietnamese life. Following the imposition of direct rule, a Han-Viet ruling class emerged, and despite frequent uprisings, the Chinese maintained control over northern Vietnam until the tenth century.<sup>42</sup> Chinese interest in Vietnam is explained by a scholar who went to Giao Chi to escape the turmoil in China following the decline of the Han dynasty: “This place is famous for precious rarities from afar: pearls, incense, drugs, elephant tusks, rhinoceros horn, tortoise shell, coral, lapis lazuli, parrots, kingfishers, peacocks, rare and abundant treasures enough to satisfy all desires.”<sup>43</sup> It was access to luxury products which made northern Vietnam attractive to the Chinese court.

Chinese influence also affected the arts. Han-style brick tombs began to replace indigenous tombs. Han graves contained burial items such as clay models of houses, figurines, jars, incense burners, basins, and other everyday items. Han-style tombs in northern Vietnam sometimes reflect a mixture of features derived from Chinese and Vietnamese traditions.<sup>44</sup> Thousands of very elaborate clay house models were buried in southern China and northern Vietnam, especially between the first and sixth centuries CE. We do not know whether the persons buried in these tombs were northerners and their descendants, or indigenous persons who had become part of the imperial governing class. Chinese material culture was not restricted to northern Vietnam. Excavations at Tra Kieu near Hoi An demonstrate that the people living there used Han-style roof tiles and pottery and owned seals written in Chinese characters.<sup>45</sup>

By the last quarter of the second century, local men rose to important positions within the imperial bureaucracy, possibly signifying greater regional autonomy. A polity in southern Nhat Nam, Lin Yi, began to appear in the Chinese records in the 190s. The polity included coastal groups, highland peoples, and renegade Han. They engaged in plundering and became a chronic rival to the suzerainty of the imperial government in the Red River plain. This kingdom left no texts, and no archaeological sites can be definitively associated with it. The name means “Forest City” in Chinese; whether the kingdom had any other name is unknown, as is the ethnicity of the inhabitants. They may have constituted a mixture of Mon-Khmer and Cham, with a gradual increase in the Cham component.

The competition between Lin Yi and Giao Chi (the Red River plain) is interwoven with the rise and demise of the imperial dynasties of China. Giao Chi’s governor, Shi Xie (Si Nhiep), switched his allegiance from the floundering Han (which fell in 220 CE) to the rising Wu dynasty, which took control of south China.<sup>46</sup> Two other kingdoms, Wei and Shu, initially controlled the northeast and northwest. Chinese remained divided among various dynasties until 589 CE. Shi Xie was an important patron of Buddhism. Several important Buddhist pilgrims and scholar monks, such as the Indian-Scythian Kalyanaruci, translated Buddhist texts. Sogdian Buddhist priest Kang Senghui (200–247 CE) translated Sanskrit scriptures into Chinese; he also introduced Buddhism to the Wu court. The form of Buddhism practiced at Luy Lau incorporated indigenous Vietnamese elements. Four temples were dedicated to and received a statue representing one of the four local goddesses who demonstrated the people’s relationship with nature: the Goddess of Clouds, Goddess of Rain, Goddess of Thunder, and Goddess of Lightning.<sup>47</sup>

The death of Shi Xie in 226 provided an opportunity for Wu to take over Giao Chi. The Wu dynasty's harsh means of exacting tribute from Giao Chi, Cuu Chan, and Lin Yi (Nhat Nam) met with resistance from the three polities. The account of Lady Trieu, who resisted the Wu dynasty in Cuu Chan, is commemorated in Vietnamese records. Giao Chi continued to be caught up in the political struggle in the north as the Wu were eventually overcome by the expanding Jin dynasty, which then assumed control of Giao Chi. Lin Yi sent missions to the Jin kingdom which had its capital at Luoyang in the late third century. Many other small kingdoms in south Vietnam as well as the major kingdom of Funan sent embassies to Luoyang in 286 CE.

In 347, Lin Yi carried out a full-scale invasion of Giao (Giao Chi). The Lin Yi king, who was interestingly a Han descendant, passed away, but his son continued to attack Giao. The Lin Yi troops were routed by Jin in 359, but launched further attacks on Giao in 399, 405 to 407, 413, 415, and 424. Despite the frequent attacks, Giao prospered during the period of its next Chinese overlord, the Liu Song dynasty (420–479). A Giao expedition set out in 446 which advanced into Nhat Nam, defeated the Lin Yi king, sacked his port on the Gianh River, and raided his capital near modern Hue. This campaign effectively destroyed the Lin Yi polity. By eradicating Lin Yi, the expedition paved the way for the subsequent establishment of Cham polities in the Hue area.

Giao expanded during the fifth century agriculturally, commercially, intellectually, and religiously. In the late fifth century, many Chinese governors sent to Giao were scholars who spent much of their time reading. One of these governors was known for his calligraphy; another was known for his intellectual exchanges with Buddhist monks. The influence of the Chinese court in the north began to wane, and competition erupted among the strongmen in Giao. In the early sixth century, two men, Ly Bi and Tinh Thieu, led a rebellion which drove the Liang dynasty officials out of Giao.<sup>48</sup> Ly Bi (544–547) called his kingdom *Van Xuan* (Ten Thousand Spring Times), took the title *Thien Duc* (Heavenly Virtue), built a palace called *Van Tho* (Ten Thousand Life Spans), and established a new capital near Luy Lau. Ly Bi attempted to use Buddhism to legitimize and strengthen his reign.<sup>49</sup> However, a power struggle between Ly Bi and Tinh Thieu ensued which was continued by their clan members. The conflict eventually ended when Ly Phat Tu defeated Trieu Quang Phuc in 557.

During the sixth century, Buddhism flourished in northern Vietnam. Ly Phat Tu, whose name means “The Son of Buddha with the Ly Surname”, was a devout Buddhist who built 20 temples, supported the translations of *sutras*, sponsored 500 ordained monks in the capital of Giao, and brought in prominent monks to teach at the temples.<sup>50</sup> The Indian monk, Bodhidharma, who introduced *Thien* (Zen) meditation to China, spent time in Vietnam. He is represented in the Vietnamese Buddhist pantheon as Brahman Vinitaruci. Bodhidharma arrived in Vietnam in 580 and resided in Clouds Pagoda (Phap Van) in Luy Lau, which remained the center of Buddhism in the sixth century. He founded the *Thien* sect and spent 14 years writing and teaching. Vinitaruci featured prominently in Vietnamese dynastic history until the thirteenth century.<sup>51</sup>

In 602, the new unifiers of China, the Sui dynasty, attacked Giao and defeated Ly Phat Tu. The Sui troops also raided and razed the Cham capital at Tra Kieu.<sup>52</sup> These attacks heralded a new period in Chinese-Vietnamese relations.



## FUNAN

Funan is the modern pronunciation of Chinese characters used in texts from the third to the seventh century to denote a kingdom centered in the Mekong Delta. In ancient times these characters were probably pronounced *biunâm*, which is close to the Khmer word *bnam*, now pronounced *phnom*, which means “mountain”. As with Protoclassic kingdoms on the Isthmus of Kra, almost everything we know of this kingdom comes from Chinese sources, but in this case we have eyewitness descriptions from Chinese visitors, rather than notes on the interviews which Chinese officials made when foreign countries sent embassies to China. Yet we still do not know what the local people called their kingdom.

A place listed in Klaudios Ptolemaios’ *Geographia Huphegensis*, Kattagara, is in the area of the Mekong Delta. It is not a settlement, however; instead it is an “*anchorage of the Sinai*”. The meaning of this phrase has not yet been discovered.

We do know that the rulers of Funan used Sanskrit titles *parwatabhupala* or *sailaraja*, both meaning “Lord of the Mountain”. A similar title, *Sailendra*, was later used by Buddhist rulers of Java and South Sumatra. Some scholars have speculated that the Indonesian Sailendra were descended from Funan, but no evidence confirms this theory. The title “lord of the mountain” is in harmony with indigenous Seasian beliefs about mountains as the place where ancestors and gods can be contacted, where ascetics can go to obtain supernatural power, and with south Asian beliefs in Mount Meru at the center of the universe, where the gods lived. In Buddhist tradition, Buddha gave some of his most important sermons such as the Lotus Sutra on mountains.

Chinese texts contain several versions of the origin of the kingdom. One of them replicates a theme which reappears in Cambodia and Java. The kingdom was originally ruled by a woman who was the daughter of a *naga*, a divine serpent. An Indian Brahmin named Kaundinya, led by a supernatural being, came with a group of brahmanas or merchants, used a magic bow to conquer her, married her, and founded a new line of rulers.<sup>53</sup> Similar legends are found in south India, among the Pallava, for instance, and in an early inscription from Champa.

The *History of the Liang Dynasty* (502–556) says that a later ruler, Fan Shihman, assembled a fleet, conquered more than 10 kingdoms, and brought them under his rule. There is archaeological evidence in the form of coins and other objects for contact between the isthmian region and the Mekong Delta at this time, but it is impossible to detect whether conquest was involved. It is more likely that commerce and cultural exchanges were responsible for the contact.

In the 1960s, it was assumed that at its apogee Funan “must have encompassed southern Vietnam, the central Mekong, and a large part of the Menam Valley and the Malay peninsula”.<sup>54</sup> Most historians now believe that the Chinese assumed that Funan’s political structure was more centralized, like the Chinese model, than was really the case.<sup>55</sup> The mandala type of polity which dominated Seasian political thought during the Classic did not conceive of conquering territory. Although Funan was located in the same geographical area as Angkor, it is unlikely that Angkor modelled itself on Funan, or that Funan was a territorially-based kingdom. More likely it was a typical early Seasian mandala, in which political power manifested itself in the form of ability to extract tribute and tokens of subservience, but not direct rule of distant provinces.



Funan was probably a cluster of polities in a deltaic arena where *cakravartins* wrestled with one another for supremacy. Extensive remains of a canal network provide evidence in favour of territorial organization extending over a rather large proportion of the Mekong delta, but not beyond it. The emergence of an elite in the delta may have been stimulated by trade involving resources brought down the river from the hinterland, which enabled them to forge links with the Philippines, the Siam-Malay Peninsula, China, and India. Archaeological evidence cannot determine whether Funan was a unified state or a cluster of small polities in the Mekong Delta.

Some scholars interpret the inscription from Vocanh, central Vietnam, 300 kilometers north of the delta, as the record of a Funan vassal. This is important because this is the oldest known Seasian royal proclamation. Unfortunately, the Vocanh stele and all Protoclassic inscriptions discovered in the delta are written in Sanskrit. We cannot say whether Funan people spoke an Austronesian or Austroasiatic language. Recent archaeological research lends weight to the conclusion that Funan was a Mon-Khmer polity. Pottery discovered at Oc-èo and Angkor Borei has more in common with later Cambodian ceramics than with those found in such probable areas of Preclassic Austronesian culture as Sahuynh. It is more likely that the Vocanh inscription was issued by a ruler of Cham affiliation rather than a vassal or representative of Funan.

After the Han dynasty fell in 220 CE, Funan sent a mission to the new southern kingdom of Wu sometime between 226 and 231, which served to acquaint the Chinese, if they did not already know it, with the fact that Funan could serve as a link between Wu and India and the Persian Gulf. Wu was eager to obtain imports from the South Seas, such as pearls, kingfisher feathers, and tortoise shell, and so sent a return mission to Funan within the next few years. No record of this mission survives, but between 245 and 250 more Chinese ambassadors sailed to Funan on ships belonging to foreigners; China did not have ships capable of long voyages. Although their original reports have disappeared, quotes from one of the envoys have been preserved in other texts. He mentioned an island, perhaps Java or Sumatra, which he apparently visited, together with Bangka, Belitung, and Borneo (in all, he lists 10 places on the Malay Peninsula and the archipelago).

In Funan, he met an Indian diplomat, confirming that Funan had regular contact with India. The Chinese envoy reported that Funan had walled villages, palaces, and houses. His report that “they like to engrave ornaments and to chisel” is borne out by the discovery of many artifacts related to metal working, including gold, silver, tin, and copper found at the major site of Oc-èo in the Mekong Delta. They had books and archives, used an Indic script to write, and paid tax in gold, silver, and perfume.<sup>56</sup>

Wu’s history came to an end in 280 when they were conquered by Qin. Thereafter Funan sent embassies to various Chinese kingdoms. In the Southern Dynasties period (420–589 CE), 99 foreign tribute missions visited the various kingdoms which ruled China.<sup>57</sup> Funan sent 17 missions with tribute, including commodities for religious rituals like gharu wood (a type of incense), ivory and sandalwood stupas and statues, and glass vessels. Luxuries for the nobility consisted of gold and silver articles, cowrie ornaments, scented wood, ivory, peacock feathers, and tortoise shells, which were probably all locally sourced items, as well as items such as gems, coral, opaque glass, cotton, and storax, which were probably re-exports.

The Seasians mainly sought Chinese silk in exchange. The *History of the Qi*, one of the Southern dynasties which ruled from 479 to 502, also refers to active maritime trade: “Of all the precious things

in the world none are better than those of the southern barbarians . . . Merchant ships arrive from afar and bring these things to the southern provinces. . . . The goods are stored in the imperial treasury.” A Chinese trader from Qi named Zhang Qing-zhen “calculated carefully the silks and brocades which he used to trade with the *Kun-lun bo*”.<sup>58</sup> The term *Kun-lun bo* meant the ships of the people who lived in the South China Sea. This suggests that a mercantile class in south China was used to dealing with Seasian shippers, but no other information about them survives.

At this time two Buddhist monks from Funan, expert translators of Sanskrit, moved to China. The *History of the Southern Qi* mentions a Funan ruler named Jayavarman, and says that Funan people were aggressive toward their neighbours, whom they sometimes captured and enslaved, but they were also expert smiths of gold rings and bracelets, silver plates, bronze statues, and shipbuilders. Large groups of families constructed ponds; this practice typifies later Khmer culture and is evidence in favour of identifying Funan as a Khmer kingdom.

Jayavarman was a devotee of Mahesvara (Siva), who “descended” on a mountain, and died in 514. He left no inscriptions, but his queen and his son did. The queen, Kulaprabhawati, apparently a devotee of Visnu, wished to become an ascetic, and had a hermitage built by an artificial lake. Her inscription was found in Takèo Province, Cambodia, on the fringe of the Mekong Delta. His son Gunavarman’s inscription was found in the Plaine des Jones in the delta. It describes the hard work of reclaiming a kingdom from the mud and erecting a temple with a Visnu footprint. Gunavarman may have been assassinated by his eldest brother, Rudravarman, who sent embassies to China between 517 and 539. Rudravarman was remembered in the seventh century as the predecessor of Bhavavarman I, and in the tenth century as the ancestor of a line of kings.

Funan continued to send embassies to China until the early seventh century. Then, the Chinese believed, Funan was conquered by a kingdom called Zhenla. Like Funan, no explanation of this name has yet been proposed. The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Yijing in the late seventh century mentioned Funan but complained that Buddhism, which had once been popular in that country, had been destroyed by a wicked king.

## ARCHAEOLOGY OF FUNAN

Archaeological research in the delta has yielded numerous traces of what archaeologists designate either Funan or Oc-èo culture. The most important site which can be equated with Funan is in the village of Oc-èo, 25 kilometers from the sea, at the foot of a group of granitic hills called Bathê. A canal leads from this site toward the shore; 11 kilometers seaward from Oc-èo another canal intersects it, and at this intersection is Ta Kèo, which was perhaps the outer harbor of Oc-èo.

Oc-èo is by far the largest known Protoclassic settlement in Seasia: the site covers 450 hectares enclosed by five exterior rectangular moats and four ramparts 1.5 kilometers wide and 3 kilometers long, bisected by a large canal now silted in. Related sites are found within a radius of 20 square kilometers. The site once was dotted with 35 mounds on which were scattered vestiges of brick buildings on granite foundations. These may be the first brick structures built in Seasia, possibly dating from the fifth century. No stone components such as lintels, door jambs, or steps characteristic of later structures have

been found. Louis Malleret was the first archaeologist to conduct extensive research at this site, in the 1940s. In a central mound he found brick foundations, a ceramic lion and other animals, and a lingga.<sup>59</sup> Building fragments consist of balusters of stone and terracotta, tiles with naga tips, stone statues of *Kala*, *makara*, Siva, Visnu, Ganesa, Uma, and *dharmacakra*, and bronze Buddhas.

Wooden pillars driven into the ground were preserved by the damp soil, probably indicating the use of dwellings built on stilts. The buildings once had roofs of flat tiles like those of Champa rather than Cambodia, where roof tiles were curved. More than 30 Buddha images carved of local wood have been found in the delta.<sup>60</sup> Several of these have been carbon-dated to the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>61</sup> Shellfish were a common source of food for the Oc-èo residents. Large quantities of their shells were found in habitation deposits.

Evidence of the site's earliest existence includes Roman artifacts: bronze and gold medallions, including one depicting Emperor Antonius Pius dated 152 CE, coins, and nine intaglia. Chinese artifacts such as a fragment of a bronze mirror of the late second century CE, are scarcer despite the site's proximity to Chinese-ruled Vietnam. Scholars have suggested that the site may have been the place known to Klaudios Ptolemaios around 150 CE as Kattigara. This was not the name of a town, however, but the "anchorage of the Chinese", according to the annotation. It may correspond to a place called Samudrapura ("City of the Sea" in Sanskrit), mentioned in an inscription (K. 137)<sup>62</sup> which on the basis of its script has been postulated to date from 650 to 700, after Funan is thought to have disintegrated.

Other imported artifacts came from Iran and the Gandhara and Kushana areas of India. Malleret found evidence of many activities which Chinese envoys to Funan in the mid-third century mentioned were carried on there, including metal working. Partially finished items include small gold plaques. Crucibles with copper carbonate adhesions indicate that bronze was also worked, though bronze objects are scarcer than gold and tin items in the site.<sup>62</sup> He also found abundant iron slag. Oc-èo's inhabitants were employed in many specialized occupations using imported raw materials. They made glass beads and pottery, and cast tin pendants, engraved jewellery, fashioned gold ornaments, and carved at least 23 types of precious and semi-precious stones.<sup>63</sup> No specialized craft quarters have been discovered, but this may be the result of the severe disturbance which the site has experienced. That pottery was made, probably as a full-time profession, is demonstrated by the discovery of kiln supports, remains of a potter's wheel, and what may have been a wooden paddle for forming pottery.<sup>64</sup>

Coins, probably locally made, as well as imported examples, indicate the existence of a monetized economy. Oc-èo has yielded the largest number of glass beads recovered at any archaeological site in Seasia.<sup>65</sup> The largest category consists of a type termed "Indo-Pacific beads", mainly opaque brown-red and orange-red, often called *mutisalah*. Such beads have been found in many sites in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. It has been suggested that Oc-èo made some of these beads and exported some to other places in Seasia,<sup>66</sup> but the majority, if not all, were probably imported from India.

Numerous deposits of dammar (amber-like tree resin) were recovered in all layers of the site, especially near the central canal. Some resin may have been used for boat caulking,<sup>67</sup> but some varieties were extremely valuable in China as incense (they could be worth their weight in gold). Analysis of the dammar to identify its specific type is necessary to determine what it was probably used for. Dammar was available from the Mekong hinterland.

More than 300 other sites of the same culture and period have now been discovered in the Mekong Delta, and more than 20 have been excavated. These can be divided into three categories: residential sites, such as Oc-èo, Dong Thap, Dong Dhua, Nhon Thanh, and Nen Chua; religious structures (10 sites); and burial grounds (six sites). At Go Thap, a burial mound covering one hectare contains brick-lined pits, human ashes, gold discs, rings, flowers, and gold leaves with numerous motifs, including Visnu, Garuda, water buffalo, elephant, snake, conch shells, sun, plants, and even a house on stilts with a radiocarbon date of 400 to 600 CE.<sup>68</sup> Brick structures on hills near Oc-èo and Angkor Borei indicate the symbolic importance of these natural features for early religion in Funan.

Several trading communities already existed in the delta at the very beginning of the Protoclassic. At Go Hang, for example, beads of glass, agate, and carnelian were associated with a radiocarbon date of 54 BCE to 130 CE. Then a major transformation took place, for example, at Nen Chua, where a large brick and stone structure was built, associated with a lingga and gold ornaments. It has been inferred that ashes found in subterranean brick chambers there are derived from cremated human remains, but it seems likely that these represent consecration deposits inserted there as part of rituals at the founding of the temple. At a brick ruin in Go Xoai, gold leaves included one with a fifth-century Sanskrit inscription. Protoclassic inscriptions from the delta mention several *pura*: Tamandarapura, Samudrapura, and Svargadvarapura; more than 20 more *pura* are mentioned outside the delta. The Chinese *Sui Shu* says that in the early seventh century Funan had 30 enclosed settlements with at least 1,000 households each.

Pottery from Funan has been discovered at two sites in the Malay Peninsula. At Kuala Selinsing, on the west coast of the state of Perak, several sherds very similar to a particular type known from Oc-èo were found together with items imported from India during the Protoclassic such as a carnelian seal with a Sanskrit inscription dated palaeographically to the fourth or fifth century.<sup>69</sup> The second Malaysian site to yield pottery from Funan is Pontian, Pahang, where remains of an old boat were accidentally uncovered about 1.6 kilometers up a river from the sea. The hull was “covered with heaped up sherds” from jars with round bottoms, decorated with typical Oc-èo motifs and techniques.<sup>70</sup> Some of the jars which stood about a meter high may have been containers for rice; some rice grains were found on the boat. The *History of the Liang Dynasty* says that Funan’s ships carried up to 100 men, who were employed as paddlers.<sup>71</sup>

Funan was a major link in a shipping network which stretched around the South China Sea. Cloves, from eastern Indonesia, probably reached China via Funan. *Dan-lan* islanders from the Philippines sailed to Funan with iron. Trade in metal objects and ores around the shores of the South China Sea was probably an important activity during Funan’s period of greatness.<sup>72</sup> Ironically, the Mekong Delta was both one of the main consumers of metal and one of the most metal-deficient areas in Seasia. Conversely, metal-producing areas of Seasia were relatively underpopulated.

## EPIGRAPHY OF FUNAN

Oc-èo has yielded the oldest known writing in Seasia: Brahmi script which dates from the second to fifth centuries CE. The writing is found on small stones used as seals, intaglios, and rings, and does not appear to have been written at Oc-èo itself.<sup>73</sup>

A Sanskrit inscription of the sixth century mentions that Jayavarman, “son of the king” of the line of Kaundinya, entrusted a sanctuary containing an image of Visnu’s feet to his son Gunavarman, in a domain which he had “wrested from the swamp”. Another Sanskrit inscription is Buddhist rather than Hindu, and refers to Jayavarman and his son Rudravarman. The first two stanzas praise Buddha; the next two praise King Rudravarman; the fifth says that his father, King Jayavarman, gave the office of inspector of royal goods to the son of a Brahmin. The rest praise this functionary and his family, and describe a foundation made during Rudravarman’s reign. George Coedès concluded that the inscription cannot refer to Jayavarman I, who reigned around 660, because the script style was older, slightly before 550. He therefore concluded that this Jayavarman must be the same king as Chinese sources mention in 514 (Jayavarman died; Rudravarman succeeded him). Chinese texts showed that Buddhism flourished under Jayavarman I. He may have overthrown his Hindu brother Gunavarman.

Two inscriptions from Angkor Borei (K. 557 and K. 600), both dated 611 CE) imply that the capital of the last recorded king of Funan, also named Rudravarman, was located there. Another inscription provisionally dated to 650 CE (the reign of another king known as Jayavarman I) mentions that Funan’s last ruler, Rudravarman, lived in Angkor Borei. The *Liang Shu* says the “enclosed settlement” (capital?) of Funan was 500 *li* (200 kilometers/120 miles) from the sea, which would fit the location of Angkor Borei. Another Chinese record, the *Xin Tangshu*, says that the capital was once at *Temu*, but after that city was captured by Zhenla in the late sixth century, it moved to *Nafuna* (Naravaranagara).

## ANGKOR BOREI

Angkor Borei is on the Takeo River, 8 kilometers west of the Bassac River, 22 kilometers west of the Mekong. Two sets of radiocarbon dates span the period from the fourth century BCE to the seventh century CE.<sup>74</sup> Angkor Borei was abandoned at the end of the Protoclassic, at about the same time as Funan crumbled.

There is evidence that the site was linked to the Takeo River by canals by the first century CE.<sup>75</sup> Some have hypothesized that Angkor Borei was Naravarnagara, a capital of Funan in the sixth century, but Michael Vickery believes that Naravaranagara was 60 kilometers northeast of Angkor Borei.

Angkor Borei differs from Oc-èo and the other sites of the delta in numerous ways. After Oc-èo, Angkor Borei was one of the most impressive sites in Protoclassic Seasia. Ruins here cover 300 hectares, surrounded an enormous wall, amorphic in shape, with a perimeter of 6 kilometers, 4.5 meters high, and 2.4 meters wide; it may have enclosed a population of 20,000.<sup>76</sup> In some places a road and structures were built atop it. It is flanked by inner and outer moats, some natural, others man-made,<sup>77</sup> and encloses a *baray*, or reservoir, pools, canals, and at least 15 ancient structures. It has been estimated that 9.5 million bricks weighing 142,500 metric tons were used in constructing its wall. The bricks are highly fired and extremely hard. The wall lacks bastions, guardhouses, or gateways; it was probably not built for defensive purposes, but to provide dry land during the part of the year when the waters of the Mekong turn the region into a giant swamp.

Around 500 CE, Buddhism enjoyed royal favour in Funan, where Indian missionaries frequently called, according to Chinese sources. A large proportion of the earliest Buddhist images found in Seasia have come from Angkor Borei and its environs. The hill of Phnom Da, 5 kilometers from Angkor Borei, was an important early religious center where important early statues of Avalokitesvara and the Hindu deity Harihara have been found. The term “Phnom Da Style” was coined to represent this assemblage. The oldest statuary from this site consists of seven statues of avatars of Visnu, including an eight-armed Visnu, Balarama, Rama, and Krisna Govardhana. The statuary displays strong Gupta influence from India, and is normally assumed to date from the reign of King Rudravarman (514–539 CE), though a recent study argued that it is slightly later.<sup>78</sup>

In addition to the dichotomy between Buddhist and Brahmanical religion, statues of Siva in the Mekong Delta also are found in different areas than Visnus. It has been proposed that this distribution was connected with different ethnic groups and polities until the end of the Protoclassic, when Harihara (half Siva, half Visnu) appeared, possibly in a political effort to reconcile these divisions.<sup>79</sup>

## CERAMICS

Excavations at Wat Komnou, Angkor Borei, in 1999 uncovered a layer of artifacts almost 4 meters thick, consisting of pottery, bones, glass beads, byproducts of metal working, and burials possibly dating from the first century CE. The pottery forms from here resemble those found in other parts of the Mekong Delta, especially the Vietnamese area, but are not closely related to those of contemporary sites in northwest Cambodia or northeast Thailand, where Khmer culture later became well developed.<sup>80</sup> Three phases of pottery at Angkor Borei were identified (500–200 BCE; 200 BCE–300 CE; 300–600 CE).<sup>81</sup> Survey has also yielded evidence of Angkor-period green- and brown-glazed stoneware, as well as Chinese green and *qingbai* ware from the Song-Yuan period, and blue and white ware from the Yuan and Ming.

One important variety made in Phase 3 is Fine Buffware, mainly used to make water ewers called *kendi* in Southeast Asia. Similar ceramics have been found at Oc-èo, other sites in the delta, Dvaravati-period sites in central Thailand, and Tra Kieu, central Vietnam.<sup>82</sup> “These kendi vessels are all sufficiently similar to suggest either a single production center, or other interactional factors that could account for high degrees of standardization in techniques employed in the production process for the vessels (though this may not apply to other forms with similar pastes in Seasia).”<sup>83</sup> Similar *kendis* made of similar clay called fine paste ware have been found in Indonesia and the Philippines during the Middle and Late Classic.<sup>84</sup> Almost all examples are *kendis*, ceremonial pouring vessels, except for some other shapes found at a probable production site at Pa-O in south Thailand. Probably different sites with access to high-quality white clay made this ware at different times. The style may have been developed in the Oc-èo period and area, then imitated by potters at Pa-O, possibly as a result of trade with the Mekong Delta. This ware is a marker of a ceramic interaction sphere, one of the more prominent examples of a Protoclassic Seasian network comparable to bronze drums or *lingling-o* of the Preclassic and early Protoclassic.



## OC-ÈO'S HINTERLAND

### Banteay Prei Nokor

Banteay Prei Nokor lies in Kompong Cham, slightly northeast of the Mekong Delta, near the source of one of the small rivers which flow into the bay where Ho Chi Minh City is located. The Prasat Preah Toc group of three temples includes one which may be “the most complete group of ruins probably of the Funan Period”. Parmentier thought it might have been Funan’s capital; Coedès thought it might have been Jayavarman II’s first capital, called Indrapura. Inscriptions possibly of the Funan period have been reported from this site.<sup>85</sup> In the Early Classic it became one of the biggest sites in Cambodia.

### Prohear

Prohear straddles the late Preclassic and the beginning of the Protoclassic. It has yielded the richest burials from this transitional period of any site in Seasia. It is located in the same general area as Banteay Prei Nokor, in Pre Veng Province. The site was severely looted, but villagers reported finding almost 20 Dongson drums there. Another site, Bit Meas, 8 kilometers southwest of Prohear, was destroyed by looters. Large quantities of iron objects were reportedly found.

Excavations of remaining parts of the site in 2008 and 2009 yielded 43 graves. Pottery included some fine orange ware and other ceramics resembling those from Angkor Borei during the period 200 BCE to 300 CE. Blue glass beads indicate external trade links. The most unusual finds were 79 gold and silver objects, mainly jewellery possibly worn in the hair, and earrings. Villagers reported finding gold finger rings. Sources of gold are known in Cambodia, but it is suspected that the Prohear people like those of Oc-èo obtained most of their gold from abroad. One other site in this region yielded a similar quantity of gold: Giong Lon in south Vietnam, where gold masks were found as well as beads and earrings.<sup>86</sup>

### Angkor region

Sites of the late Preclassic and Protoclassic have been found in the Angkor area. One grave was discovered under the West Baray.<sup>87</sup>

Phum Snay, 80 kilometers northwest of Angkor, was largely destroyed by road construction and looting, but rescue excavation there from 2001 to 2004 retrieved four burials from the second century BCE to the second century CE.<sup>88</sup> The site yielded a unique assemblage of burial offerings, including iron weapons, bronze ornaments, and epaulet-like decorations for the shoulders made of metal (or in one case a potsherd) imitating buffalo horns. An unusually large proportion of the skeletons from the site had severe head wounds, some of which healed, others of which must have been fatal. Looters reported finding bronze helmets. Phimai black pottery, and glass and carnelian beads provide evidence

for long-distance trade. Food bone from non-burial contexts indicated that the population of this area still had access to a wide range of wild animals, some of which lived in deep forest.

## UPPER MUN VALLEY, KHORAT PLATEAU: NON BAN JAK

Non Ban Jak in the Upper Mun valley, Khorat Plateau dates from the third through sixth centuries CE – the end of the Iron Age in Higham’s terminology, the end of the Protoclassic in the system used in this book. The site dates from the Protoclassic, but the artifacts and burial customs are similar to those used in Khorat in the Preclassic period: the dead were buried with offerings of pottery, jewellery, and tools. There was no evidence that changes occurring in the delta such as the use of writing and frequent long-distance communication had made any impact on the people of this area.

The excavation team used precise excavation methods to recover details of house floors and wall foundations. One sign that the inhabitants of Non Ban Jak did appropriate an idea from afar was found in a room with a clay floor, which had been cut for three burials. Pottery vessels with lids were found under all three corners of the room which survived. This is highly reminiscent of the custom of burying consecration deposits under the corners of temples during the Classic period (see “The devaraja”, Chapter 5). The excavators interpret this as a burial within a profane dwelling, but the apparent sacralization of the room suggests that it may have had ritual significance.<sup>89</sup>

The site is large (360 by 170 meters), and has abundant evidence of local handicraft production. One of the most important pieces of evidence is a well-preserved pottery kiln made of clay and daub. Some pots left inside the kiln after its last use are similar to pottery found in burials on the site. This sophisticated pyrotechnology implies that the production of glazed ceramics in the same region in the Classic may have evolved from local roots rather than external influence.

Historical sources are difficult to interpret, but Oc-èo archaeological culture and references to the kingdom of Funan both came to an end in the seventh century. Oc-èo was a highly advanced society for its time, but it dwindled into insignificance and was not replaced by any comparable political or commercial entity. The Mekong Delta was never an important center of civilization again. Instead a new society coalesced upstream from the Mekong Delta.

## SEASIA AND SOUTH ASIA

*In a dim distant unrecorded age  
We had met thou and I,  
When my speech became tangled in thine  
And my life in thy life.*<sup>90</sup>

The most striking signs of the beginning of the Seasian Protoclassic period are temples, sculptures, and writing in forms clearly transmitted from South Asia. The Protoclassic period did not mark the

first contact with South Asia; this interaction had begun several hundred years earlier. Communication between different regions cannot help but stimulate new developments on the part of all concerned. The fact that there was a lag of several centuries between early contact and cultural transmission indicates that mere contact is insufficient to enable cultural traits to be transferred.

Early scholars assumed that influence must flow from an advanced to a primitive culture, and in the nineteenth century it was assumed that Indians had colonized parts of Seasia as the British were then doing to India. Three theories arose to explain the diffusion of South Asian culture to Seasia. The simplest theory was that younger princes of India with no kingdoms of their own set out across the Bay of Bengal and founded new capitals in the lands they discovered. This was the *Ksatriya* theory, after the caste to which warriors and rulers belong.<sup>91</sup> A second theory identified traders, members of the *Vaisya* caste, as the party responsible for carrying culture to the places where they traded.<sup>92</sup> The third theory, influenced by evidence that Seasians had been very interested in Indian religion and abstract thought, suggested that *Brahmanas* (Brahmins, members of the priestly caste) had been responsible.<sup>93</sup>

## KINGS, GODS, AND GODS OF THE KINGS (DEVARAJA)

Myths of “stranger kings”, charismatic foreigners who appear on ships, marry local queens, and start new dynasties, are very common in the Old World. One version involves Skythes, son of Herakles by a serpent-woman, who is the mythical founder of Scythia. In India, this myth is paralleled by the story of the origin of the Pallava dynasty of Kañcī. The term “stranger king” was coined in a study of Fiji.<sup>94</sup> The earliest such story in Seasia was recorded in Chinese sources of the third century CE.<sup>95</sup> A man named Kaundinya received instructions from a god in a dream and sailed a large ship which the deity guided to Funan. There he defeated the local queen and became king. Other versions are found in the *Sulalatu's-Salatin*, or “Malay Annals”, about the origin of the Malay kingdom of Melaka, the foundation of the Islamic kingdom of Mataram in sixteenth-century Java, etc. “It cannot be interpreted as an archetyped vestige, preserved in the folk memory of Indochina, of an actual instance of assumption of authority by an Indian.” The same tendency was exploited by *sayyids* in the port societies of Seasia in the eighteenth century.<sup>96</sup>

Debates about the group responsible for stimulating the Classic period in Seasia continued for more than a century. In the 1950s, when Seasia was recognized as a region on a par with South and East Asia, scholars began to consider the theory that the primary role in creating Classic culture belonged to the Seasians themselves. The selective nature of appropriation of Indic cultural achievements and their incorporation into a pre-existing Seasian framework of politics, economics, and religious thought has gradually become clearer as more data on Protoclassic Seasia has been collected. No evidence of 2,000-year old “colonies” of Indians or other foreigners in Seasia has been found. It is now accepted by most scholars that South Asian cultural cargo was transported in Seasian ships.<sup>97</sup> Archaeological research supports the idea that the Bay of Bengal was a zone of “cultural convergence” between the eastern and western shores, a sphere of mutual interaction in which people, goods, and ideas travelled in both directions in the late centuries BCE and early centuries CE.<sup>98</sup>

It has been suggested that Seasian rulers took the lead in fostering the adoption of South Asian ideas about rulership. This assumption was associated with the notion that Seasian rulers were attracted by the idea of the *devaraja*, a compound formed from Sanskrit words for “god” and “king”, and that local kings convinced their subjects to view them as incarnations of Hindu deities, particularly Siva. The word appears prominently in an inscription dated 1052 CE from Sdok Kak Thom, in Thailand near the border with Cambodia. It was further inferred that the terraced temples of Angkor were dedicated to the worship of a royal lingga identified with the king as Siva, and that the temples of Angkor were funerary structures where the ashes of dead kings were interred.

This idea still has considerable support, but it is based on incorrect assumptions.<sup>99</sup> The term *devaraja* appears in very few inscriptions. In all probability the word did not refer to the king but to a statue, perhaps a portable bronze Siva, such as is carried in processions in India today. Javanese kings did not claim to be avatars of gods before the eleventh century.<sup>100</sup> Indian kings themselves never claimed to be incarnations of deities. In India the institution of kingship was believed to be divinely inspired. According to the *Ramayana*, the god Visnu incarnated himself as Rama to destroy a demon, but there was no precedent for god-kings in subsequent history. The theory that early Indianization was driven by the desire of Seasian kings to appropriate the ideology of divine kingship from India to gain greater legitimacy has no basis.

Probably the first Seasian king to hint that he was a “detached portion of a god” was Jayavarman IV of tenth-century Cambodia, a usurper. This was no doubt a strategy to create a new form of legitimation which was not found in either conventional Khmer or Indic examples. Later Khmer inscriptions mention that the kings’ “subtle inner self” met with the “royal self” of the god Siva in linggas in temples on top of artificial mountains. The blurring of the distinction between the king and the god was thus a Khmer innovation, not an Indianized import.

A similar tendency to use language and statuary to imply that rulers were deities, either during their lives or after their deaths, appeared in east Java during the Kediri period. This may represent the resurgence of a prehistoric link between rulers, mountains, divine beings, and ancestors characteristic of Seasian societies, restated in South Asian terms and artistic motifs. The *devaraja*, whether ritual or object or the two combined, may have formed an important legitimizing function in the ninth century. However, its role may have changed when linggas were erected on stepped pyramids.

There is no evidence that temples in Cambodia or elsewhere in Seasia functioned as repositories for ashes of cremated rulers. Remains of ashes in ritual deposit boxes have been discovered in numerous temples, but it is now accepted that they were remains of other substances burnt during rituals meant to consecrate the temples, and are not remains of human beings.

Jayavarman I of Cambodia hinted that he was an incarnation of Indra. Other kings of pre-Angkor Cambodia also compared themselves with Indra, even claiming to surpass him in valor, but an Indian historian has dismissed these as “isolated references” which reflect the Indian belief that kings resemble Indra because they perform similar functions on earth as Indra in heaven.<sup>101</sup> One Cambodian inscription indicates a belief that a king’s ancestor united with Indra after death. References to Prthu and Manu in inscriptions of the early Angkor period suggest a general belief in the humanity of kings. Prthu was

created by rubbing the body of Vena, a mortal, according to the *Mahabharata*. Then Visnu entered Prthu; thus kings are mortal but have the greatness of Visnu. Manu, father of the human race, in the *Mahabharata* was nominated by Brahma to rule over men but was not a god. Only after Jayavarman IV are there explicit claims that Cambodian rulers were incarnations of Siva, Indra, Visnu, or Brahma/Prajapati. The Kapilapura inscription from the reign of Jayavarman V states that in the Kali (Dark) age there was much sin; thereupon Brahma caused Siva and Visnu to descend to earth in the form of the king. This differs from the *Manusastra* tradition.

Cambodian expressions of beliefs regarding deification evolved over centuries. The attribution of godlike status probably became a literary device denoting respect rather than literal belief. Later inscriptions contain fewer descriptions of the king's functions and dwell instead on his personality. Before Suryavarman I, Khmer kings were not divine, only protected by gods. Only after death did kings unite with a god. From Udayadityavarman II on, kings no longer received posthumous names; they were already gods during their lifetimes. The concept of deification seems to have become devalued; the king's relatives, bureaucrats, and priests were also said to be gods. Two queens were given the title *Vrah*, signifying deification. Aristocratic women were deified posthumously.

Of course, Seasian kings were attracted by South Asian political symbolism and ideology. Scholars must seek more profound meanings underlying the appropriations of foreign elements in Seasia. Brahmanism offered rulers many ways to portray themselves as superior beings, from court rituals meant to impress their potential rivals to public spectacles to entertain the public. It also provided the ideal of the *cakravartin*, the "wheel-turner" who had a right, even a responsibility, to defeat those who denied his status as the world's most virtuous human being, a position which he (and sometimes she) could claim through descent from previous rulers and by their achievements. Buddhism offered a similar role model in the form of the bodhisattva, the person who has reached enlightenment, but wishes to share his wisdom with all other creatures rather than selfishly going into nirvana alone.

## TEMPLES

One attribute of Indic religions which probably attracted Seasian rulers was the temple. In Preclassic Seasia, the only known examples of permanent architecture were terraced hillsides, some of which had stone elements such as Gunung Padang (West Java), and slab graves of Java, Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula. It is not known whether these were identified with a particular ruler or ruling family. They do not seem to have been located near population centers, and so they would not have been very powerful reminders of elite claims to authority.

The construction of temples of permanent materials only became important in India during the fifth century. The idea of contacting gods in temples through their statues evolved in tandem with the shift from sacrificial Vedic religion to the worship of individual deities. Pilgrimage places (*tirthas*) were established around the same time. The practice of carving statues of deities had already begun in Indonesia (Pasemah) and India centuries earlier, but the appearance of devotional cults of specific gods and goddesses led to an increased demand for them.

The roles of the rulers in Preclassic Seasia are unknown. We can only reconstruct them on the basis of the earliest written records and statuary, and only through the lens of the societies after these new modes of representation had become available. We can tentatively identify a few characteristics which may have been critical in the success of the Preclassic rulers. Classic Seasian rulers were not autocrats. One of the requisite qualities of the ruler was the ability to attract people to them in situations where several rulers were jostling with one another to recruit followers. One did this by creating an image of the “man of prowess”, not by conquest but by providing basic necessities such as food, and also rare items such as imported textiles.

Rulership in Seasia was only partly based on descent. In this respect as in many others, the Khmer empire was rather different from the rest of Seasia in that kingship was more often inherited by a son from his father, but in general, as Wolters pointed out, kinship in Seasia tends to be cognatic rather than agnatic. Most Seasian societies do not have family names and can trace descent through both the mother’s and father’s line. Seasian rulers normally had many wives, and thus many sons. There was no law of primogeniture. In almost all cases a privy council would convene on the death of a ruler to choose a successor. The decision of this council was helpful but not decisive. Wars of succession were frequent, though usually not prolonged or bloody.

Rulers often abdicated in old age. This custom was also found in South Asia, where it was connected with the ideal last stage of life when a man gives up all ties and either becomes a hermit or a wanderer. There is evidence that such behavior was common in Seasia. Written sources often refer to “young kings” when the “old kings” were still alive. This practice continued into the Postclassic period. Abdication provided two benefits: The rulers could free themselves from the burden of daily administration and retire to their gardens or rural estates. This also gave the king’s preferred successor the opportunity to practice the art of government and to build up a strong core of dependents who would be useful to him when the old king finally died and the privy council would meet to anoint a new ruler.

Rulers often used genealogies to support their claims to the throne, but descent in itself was not sufficient to guarantee success. Personal qualities (e.g., charisma, prowess) were important. So was wealth. Rulers were expected to be generous. To take more examples from the Postclassic and Early Modern periods, rulers were expected to attract wealth, but to redistribute it to their followers rather than hoard it for themselves. Wealth could consist of basic necessities such as food. Rulers collected numerous taxes on agricultural and natural products, and in agricultural zones these were the main resource which rulers could draw upon to nourish their clients. In some cases, control over gold and tin sources was a major source of power. In subregions where maritime trade was important, imported luxuries formed a major source of political power.

It is difficult to decide whether control over resources was more or less important than symbolism in determining the outcome of the constant struggles for supreme power. Possession of regalia was very important. In the thirteenth century the possession of the Golden Sword of Angkor was instrumental in deciding the outcome of one succession dispute. Heirlooms were not only important among the nobility; the idea of *pusaka*, items inherited from one’s ancestors which confer protective power on their descendants, is still important in parts of Seasia today.



## GODS, GURUS, AND ANCESTORS

Preclassic Seasian religion<sup>102</sup> evinced considerable concern with the power of the ancestors. This power was not always benign. The dead were seen as unhappy or vengeful, and had to be propitiated to prevent them from wreaking havoc with the living. They could also be invoked to provide warning of impending disaster, and possible assistance. The ancestors were thus respected and feared.

The Seasian concept of “the ancestors” differed from that found in China. For 12 years after death, during which the soul of the deceased was in limbo, it would be released from its individual personality and be reabsorbed into a single Great Soul, of which all human beings are detached portions. In fourteenth-century Java a ceremony called *shraddha* was performed on the twelfth anniversary of a person’s death, after which the ancestor’s personal identity vanished. Thus one could not pray to one’s own ancestor after 12 years had elapsed. One should properly speak of “The Ancestor” rather than ancestral spirits in the plural. This concept persisted throughout the Classic period. Some temples were built to commemorate the king’s mother and father as Brahminical or Buddhist deities. By the Late Classic these divinities had become identified with gods such as Siva or Buddha; all of them were thought to be aspects or portions of “The Ancestor”.

This ontology has led some scholars to apply the adjective “syncretic” to Seasian religion, especially in the Late Classic. From the beginning of the Classic period, however, there does not seem to have been any religious conflict between followers of different streams of belief or deities.<sup>103</sup> Kings in modern Thailand see no contradiction in supporting the Buddhist order but undergoing a coronation ceremony involving Brahmins.<sup>104</sup> They use the royal title *Rama*, after an incarnation of Visnu, who has been a model for royal behavior and public display in Seasia for 1,500 years. Old Mon inscriptions in Thailand show that Brahmins donated to Buddhist monasteries.<sup>105</sup> There are many other examples of this type of cooperation between Hindus and Buddhists in Seasia.

This does not mean, however, that there were no disputes between professional religious people. Buddhist and Brahman clergy competed with each other to attract followers and donations. By the ninth century a story according to which Buddha killed Siva, then resurrected him in order to convert him to a follower, was represented in Javanese temple reliefs and sculpture. A struggle between a Hindu king and a Buddhist competitor was symbolized by inscribed linggas in central Java in the ninth century, but concerned political power; religious imagery was only a means of putting it into a moral context.

The two religions maintained separate institutions throughout the Classic period, but laymen were not prevented from participating in rituals in both. Seasians did not discern any virtue in excluding any form of religious belief or practice. Numerous inscriptions record donations by rulers to both Buddhist and Hindu groups. This practice goes back at least as far as the emperor Ashoka of the Maurya dynasty in India. After he converted to Buddhism, Ashoka continued to donate to Brahminical groups. It is also a mistake to polarize Buddhism into two separate divisions called Mahayana (“Great Vehicle”) and Theravada (“Doctrine of the Elders” or Hinayana, “Lesser Vehicle”). Monks follow a particular lineage and codes of behavior when they join a monastery, but most lay Buddhists in Seasia are not concerned with such matters. The teaching of the Theravada school emphasizes the responsibility of the monk to

seek enlightenment and escape from rebirth; most laypeople are more interested in obtaining a better incarnation in their next birth, and to do so, they are not averse to finding other sources of supernatural assistance such as Bodhisattvas (“Enlightening Ones”, such as Guanyin, Goddess of Mercy, or Avalokitesvara), chants or mantras, amulets blessed by certain monks, etc., in addition to the teachings of the historic Buddha.

In parts of India where Buddhism once flourished, such as the great monastic university at Nalanda in Bihar, numerous schools of thought were studied. At Nagarjunakonda, Andhra Pradesh, are more than 30 Buddhist sites, but also 19 Brahminical temples and some medieval Jain shrines.<sup>106</sup> In a radius of 5 kilometers from Borobudur, the great Classic Buddhist monument in Java, are remains of 30 Hindu shrines. This strongly suggests a culture of religious tolerance both in Seasia and India.

By the Middle Classic era, Seasian rulers (and presumably their subjects) acknowledged not just two but three important religious groups. In addition to Buddhists and devotees of Brahminical deities, inscriptions mention *risis*, or “sages”. This group probably existed in the Early Classic period, and quite possibly played roles which had already existed in the Preclassic era. They are not explicitly mentioned in the Early Classic, but depictions of bearded men without marks of deities provide evidence in favour of the theory that this category already existed. (For more information, see “Penanggungan: The holy mountain of east Java”, Chapter 6.)

## CASTE SYSTEM

Seasian “Hinduism” had very different implications for social structure than in India.<sup>107</sup> The barrier between priests and nobles was hereditary in India, but not in Seasia. The term “Hinduism” was invented by non-Indians to denote their impression of almost all the religious beliefs found in India (except for Jainism). Seasian inscriptions do not suggest that they considered themselves Hindus. In India, non-Hindus could be inducted into the Hindu community through the *vratyastoma* ceremony, used mainly to induct non-Aryan chiefs into the ruling *ksatriya* caste, but Seasian inscriptions do not mention such ceremonies.

Seasians were apparently attracted to some particular aspects of Indian religion such as *bhakti*, or devotion to specific gods, and particular forms of *dharma*, which include the idea that subjects have natural duties to their king, but that kings also have duties toward their subjects. Seasians gave Sanskrit names to traditional ideas. Seasians never adopted fundamental elements of the caste system such as hereditary occupational groups, marriage within the caste, and separate dining.

According to the *Varnasramadharma*, an Indian text which contains fundamental rules for social organization, society should be divided into four caste groups, or *varnas*. Cambodia borrowed Indian terminology to refer to a local administrative system rather than a religious or hereditary grouping of people. According to Angkorian inscriptions, society consisted of many groups which were called *varna* or *jati*, with criteria based on age, sex, profession, region, etc. The same person could belong to several *varnas* at one time. People were appointed to specific *varnas* rather than being hereditary members of them. The goal of the caste system in Cambodia seems to have been to organize labour.

Seasian inscriptions sometimes refer to court Brahmins or *purohitas*, “royal preceptors” or religious teachers and advisers, but they were not members of the *brahmana* caste. There is a precedent for this in Tamil regions of south India, where religious figures known as *gurukkal* were sometimes regarded as Brahmins, but were not members of the *brahmana* caste. For these reasons, many scholars are uncomfortable with the use of the term “Hindu-Buddhist culture” to refer to Seasia.

## WRITING AND LITERATURE

Another South Asian cultural attainment which exerted a strong influence on Seasia was writing: both the technique of writing and Indian literary works. These two factors had different effects on Seasia. Scripts are independent from languages, and though both are correlated to a certain extent, this correlation is not 100 per cent. Sanskrit had great influence on Seasia, but it was not a language of daily discourse in India. It was reserved for highly formal situations involving religion and government. Sanskrit was used in both Hinduism and Buddhism and was written in a variety of scripts. Sanskrit no doubt provided a medium by which learned Seasians could communicate with one another and with people in India, Sri Lanka, China, and even Japan. Sanskrit thus provided the first important means of communicating across cultural boundaries in Asia.

Sanskrit (from *Samskṛta*, meaning “perfected”) is an Indo-European language, the oldest surviving example of that family, and is sometimes termed “Old Indic” or “Old Indo-Aryan”. Its descendants include Prakrit and New Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi, Gujarati, and Bengali. The languages of South India, such as Tamil and Telugu, belong to a different family (Dravidian). The oldest surviving Sanskrit language documents are 1,028 religious hymns collected in the *Rgveda* which was compiled around 1500 BCE in northwest India, but preserved orally. The language used in the epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* is somewhat different from the Vedic language.<sup>108</sup>

In Sanskrit, writing is poetically termed *Saravasvatimukha*, “the face of the goddess of speech”. The spoken word of a teacher is more respected than a written text. Poets in ancient India hoped that their verses would become “ornaments for the throats of the learned” rather than books to be read silently.<sup>109</sup> According to a belief which is first attested in 620 CE, the art of writing was invented by the creator god Brahma. A Buddhist text, the *Lalitavistara*, listed 64 different scripts which were said to exist in Buddha’s time. Jain texts list 18, one of which was called *yavanani*, “the writing of the Yavanas” (i.e., Greeks). The Greek alphabet was used in northwest India even before the invasion of Alexander the Great, as shown by inscriptions and coins. When the Greeks conquered northwest India, writing was already common, using cloth or tree bark.

Two scripts were used for the earliest writing in India: *Brāhmī* (from Brahma) and *Kharoṣṭī* (“Asslip”; the allusion here is not known).<sup>110</sup> The latter is mainly found only in northwest India. Both are derived from an ancient Semitic script, Aramaic. This alphabet may have been brought to India after Darius the Great conquered Punjab around 500 BCE; Punjab remained under Persian rule until 331 BCE. The words for writing, *lipi*, and writer, *dipi*, probably came from Old Persian *dipi*.<sup>111</sup> Most writing systems used in India are derived from Brahmi; thus traditional scripts used in Classic and modern Seasia

are derived from Aramaic via India. Early Brahmi script has been found on potsherds from the fifth or fourth century BCE in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. The sherds may have belonged to vessels dedicated to religious establishments.<sup>112</sup>

Persians employed Aramaeans as clerks. In Assyria and Babylon, Aramaic was used for official and business purposes, at first together with cuneiform writing, later replacing it. Probably there was an active trade between northwest India and the Persian Gulf, and businessmen in northwest India profited by learning to use it. The older Indus valley script had vanished by this time.

The numerals used in early Seasia including the decimal system emerged in India around the end of the first century BCE. Seasians also adopted the Indian custom of using words to stand for numbers, to form what are called chronograms. This was done to avoid misunderstanding, much as in modern times cheques are written with both numerals and numbers spelled out in letters. Varahamihira's *Pancasiddhantika* of 500 CE contains a table of words corresponding to numbers up to 49; up to eight words can be used for each number.<sup>113</sup> Sometimes letters were used as in Rome. This system was used to number pages in manuscripts in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Myanmar up to the twentieth century. This method based on signs for combinations of consonants and vowels was in use by the eighth century in teaching children the alphabet.

Modern Indonesian includes about 1,500 words derived from Sanskrit. These are concentrated in certain subjects. It is indicative that terms connected with shipping or agriculture are mainly of Indonesian origin,<sup>114</sup> suggesting that local languages had a rich vocabulary for these topics in the Preclassic. Sanskrit words were appropriated by Javanese and Malay for government and administration, but they did not replace the old words. Instead, one finds combinations such as (*rakrān*) *mapatih* and *rakryān mahāmantrī*, "chief minister". Some inscriptions use *śrī maharaja* for "king"; others use *ratu*.<sup>115</sup> Royal names and/or titles often combined Indonesian and Sanskrit terms.<sup>116</sup>

Seasians also utilized Sanskrit words to mean quite different things than they did in India. In India the word *dharma* meant "cosmic and worldly order, law and duty". In Old Javanese, however, contexts make it clear that it meant "religious or charitable foundation". The type of foundation was further specified by adding a modifier: *dharma pangāsthūlan* had to do with funerals, *dharmakṣetra* were lands which provided revenue to foundations, *dharmasīma* were lands which had special tax status, and a *dharmāśrama* was a religious hermitage. (There were apparently other kinds of hermitage which were not connected with religious foundations.) Dharmas were often given the honorific prefix *sang hyang*, Indonesian terms literally meaning "honored ancestor".<sup>117</sup> Some foundations were called *dharma haji* or *rājadharmā*, signifying some kind of royal connection or identification with the ruler. In an Indonesian expression used in the Late Classic, rulers were *didharmakan*, literally "to be *dharma*-ed" in particular temples. Perhaps some word such as "commemorated" could be understood here.

Sanskrit words could be "Indonesianized" by adding prefixes and suffixes. The Sanskrit word *mūla*, "root, origin" was converted to *kamūlan*; the precise meaning is not understood, but it seems to have meant a place where an important institution such as a royal palace or a kingdom was founded.

A group of languages called Prakrits (from *prākṛta*, "natural" or "early" writing) or Middle Indic evolved from Sanskrit in the third century BCE. The edicts of the emperor Ashoka from the third century BCE are written in several local dialects and Brahmi scripts, but they are not identical. Letters may

display as many as 10 local variations. Most of them are found in Gandhara. Many Prakrits evolved for specific literary genres: poems and literature, dramas, Jain texts, and most importantly, Buddhist texts, especially those of the Theravada canon.<sup>118</sup> The latter language is termed “Pali”. The oldest inscriptions in Pali are found in southern Myanmar (Rakhine and Sri Ksetra), and in central Thailand, at Nakhon Pathom, U Thong, Lopburi, and Si Thep. They are quotes from Buddhist scripture.<sup>119</sup> Most are undated, but are believed to have been written in the sixth to eighth centuries, based on their association with other artifacts such as sculptures estimated to date from this period and on the forms of the letters used to write them. Pali does not appear to have been spoken nor was it used for any other purpose than to repeat the word of Buddha. The objects with quotations from Buddhist texts (or “citations” as Peter Skilling calls them) were often made to be included in consecration deposits (see “Malayu and Muara Jambi”, Chapter 6). The practice of using Pali for citation inscriptions seems to have been unique to mainland Seasia.

The third South Asian language which influenced Seasia is Tamil. Malay/Indonesian contains a number of loan words derived from Tamil, and there are several important inscriptions in Medieval Tamil in Sumatra and the Siam-Malay Peninsula. Tamil was first written in about 254 BCE. The Seasian inscriptions are mainly written in the medieval form, which existed between about 700 and 1400 CE, though a few short inscriptions in Old Tamil are also known. Three systems were used to write Old Tamil, all derived from Ashokan Brahmi.<sup>120</sup>

Beginning in the first or second century BCE, Indians began to record donations to religious centers by the king but also by others. In the fourth century CE the use of copper plates for recording inscriptions became increasingly common there and soon spread to Seasia.<sup>121</sup>

Writing infiltrated Seasia gradually. The oldest Seasian inscriptions are in Sanskrit language. During the Protoclassic period, the scripts used were quite similar (though not identical) to those used in India, and the standard of Sanskrit was quite high. In the seventh century (the Early Classic), localization of the scripts (to use O.W. Wolters’ term) began. The scripts used began to take on different forms in different parts of Seasia, and more inscriptions in Seasian languages appeared.

The use of Indic scripts to write Seasian languages (“vernaculars” as opposite to Sanskrit) may have been connected with the spread of Buddhism. This was true in China, Japan, and Korea. The first printed works in Japan were all Buddhist texts.<sup>122</sup> Reproduction of the lessons of Buddha was a major way of acquiring merit. Although almost all written texts which have survived from premodern Seasia are connected with religion, there is indirect evidence that writing was important in the evolution of political institutions. When the British stormed the palace of Yogyakarta in 1811, they found and took away huge quantities of written documents. The loss of these documents seems to have had a major impact on the subsequent style of rule in Yogyakarta. The sultans seem to have become more autocratic; the power of the administrators seems to have diminished. Despite this centralization of authority, government became less effective.<sup>123</sup>

The earliest writing in Seasia is Brahmi script, carved on small objects such as stones used for stamping seals on documents and finger rings. These could have been carved in India and brought to Seasia. The largest quantity has been found at Oc-èo, south Vietnam; other examples are known from the isthmian region of the Siam-Malay Peninsula. The first script which we can be sure was written in

early Seasia is found on a large stone at Vocanh, south Vietnam. It contains no date, but palaeographically it can be assigned to about the year 300 CE. The script used for this stone is a derivative of Brahmi often called Pallava Grantha, named after a dynasty founded in southeast India in the third century, but some scholars object to the term since the use of this script was not restricted to that kingdom. Regional differences in scripts had not yet become formalized in India at this time. This form of writing was designed to be easily carved on stone, for public proclamations. It was used for the earliest inscriptions in Indonesia. One form was current throughout the Protoclassic period. At the beginning of the Early Classic period around 600 CE a new form, Later South Indian Grantha, appeared and was used until 732. Thereafter it was replaced by a local form of script called Kawi.

The Sanskrit word *kavya* refers to a genre of poetic literature. This genre assumed a major public role all over India around 300 CE, crossing political and vernacular borders. It spread into Seasia as part of the same process (a further indication of the regularity of the relationship between the lands on both sides of the Bay of Bengal).<sup>124</sup> The word became abbreviated to *Kawi* in Indonesia, and came to mean a style of script used in Java by the mid-eighth century, with local variants in Bali, Madura, Sumbawa, Sumatra, Borneo, the Siam-Malay Peninsula, and Singapore. The forms of the letters used in different periods can provide a rough guide to dating inscriptions, though outside of Java old forms tended to last longer, making the situation more complicated (see “History of Early Classic Java to 800”, Chapter 5).

In the sixth century a new variant of Brahmi script began to appear in north India. It may have been originally called *sidhamatrka* script, but by the eighth century its name was *Nāgarī* or *Devanagari*. Most scholars assume that Nagari was developed in north India because it evolved from north Indian predecessors, but the earliest examples of texts written in this script are found in south India.<sup>125</sup> This script spread rapidly, becoming important in Java in the late eighth century. It was also used in an early inscription in Bali. In north India and Tibet, it replaced the previous scripts: in Karnataka it was mainly used to write in Sanskrit; in south India it was soon replaced by Tamil Grantha. In Seasia, Nagari was mainly used in certain contexts, especially connected with Buddhism, on coins and seals, and to write in Sanskrit. The Sanur inscription from Bali, possibly written in 914, is exceptional in its use of Nagari to write a local language (Balinese).<sup>126</sup> In ninth-century Cambodia, King Yasovarman used both Nagari and Old Khmer script to record the protection of hermitages by Brahminical gods.<sup>127</sup> Khmer Nagari script has features which were clearly derived from Old Khmer script.

It was relatively common to use another script on the same inscription in addition to Nagari in Seasia; perhaps few Seasians could read Nagari. Nevertheless, Nagari’s rapid spread is a good indicator of the frequency of communication between Seasia, India, and Sri Lanka. Deviations between the forms of the script used in Java from those of India indicate that the inscriptions were probably composed by Javanese. Early Nagari inscriptions on stone in Java are dated 778, 782, and 792. An important outlier is found on the island of Karimun, between Sumatra and Singapore, which probably dates to the same period. All of these are connected with Buddhism.

No Nagari inscriptions were carved in Indonesia for the next 350 years (although Nagari was probably used to write on perishable materials) before it reappeared in East Java during the thirteenth century. These inscriptions are found on statues of esoteric Buddhist deities such as Amoghapasha found



at Candi Jago, dated circa 1265. The script is similar to that used in Orissa at the same period, when esoteric Buddhism also flourished there.<sup>128</sup>

## HISTORIOGRAPHY OF INDIAN CONTACT WITH SEASIA

No historical texts illuminate the earliest contacts between civilizations in Sasia and their counterparts in Seasia. Those contacts took place in the late Preclassic era. Archaeological data from Ko Kho Khao, Kanchanaburi, and a few other sites in western and southern Thailand are all we have to describe the beginning of this contact. The Protoclassic is only slightly better when it comes to written sources. No historical sources from South Asia describe this contact; we only have allusions in literary sources which cannot be used to reconstruct events and processes of this early contact. “Unfortunately the genius of Indian thought sought its expression in realms other than those of historical or topographical writings.”<sup>129</sup>

The *Ramayana*, standardized in the second or third century BCE, contains references to Java and Sumatra. In the search for the missing Queen Sita, Sugriwa, king of the monkeys, sends his army to “the island of Yawa which is graced by seven kingdoms (and) the island of gold and silver which is adorned by gold mines”.<sup>130</sup> Other early Indian sources such as the *Vayu Purana* also mention Yamadvipa and Malayadvipa and their mines of gold, precious stones, silver, and sandalwood (a Seasian product). These were provinces in a region of small mountainous islands scattered over a vast area to the south of India. Other toponyms in the Puranic texts which most scholars agree are vague references to western Seasia are Kataha (Kedah, now a state in northwest peninsular Malaysia) and Dwipantara, an archipelago from whence the scent of cloves could be smelled.<sup>131</sup> A collection of stories from south India mentions four merchants who had come to India from Kataha.<sup>132</sup> A collection of stories about Tamil devotees of Visnu, the *Harisamayadīpam*, says that a devotee went to Dwipantara to raise funds for a temple.

Two flowery names which refer to Seasia in Indian literature are *Suvarnabhūmi*, Sanskrit for “golden land”, and *Suvarnadvīpa*, a Sanskrit phrase meaning “golden peninsula/island”. Some scholars think that both Suvarnadvipa and Suvarnabhumi were general names for the western part of Seasia. Suvarnabhumi first appears in the *Arthashastra*, a Sanskrit manual on government which is traditionally ascribed to Kautilya, a minister of Candragupta Maurya, composed between the fourth century BCE and the third century CE. The name was sometimes applied to Sumatra, for example, in the inscription of 1286 found at Rambahan, Sumatra. In earlier sources, however, it seems to have meant the part of western Seasia which was known to the Sanskrit-using class of Sasia.

Early Buddhist texts such as the *Sasanavangsapadipika* and *Jātakas*, “birth stories” about the 547 incarnations of Siddharta Gautama, mention Suvarnadvipa several times.<sup>133</sup> The *Jatakamala*, a Buddhist text in Sanskrit attributed to Aryasura of the fourth to sixth centuries CE, mentions merchants from Suvarnabhumi who go to India. In one story, Prince Mahajanaka joins merchants to go there to search for his fortune. In another a brahmana named Śaṁkha becomes wealthy from trading there. In other contexts Suvarnabhūmi is thought to refer to the coastal area of south Myanmar, perhaps the Mottama area and the west coast of south Thailand, possibly including Khao Sam Kaeo.

Another well-known Buddhist text, the *Milinda-pañha*, or “Questions of Milinda”, partly dates to the second or third century CE, but was expanded in Sri Lanka around 1400. Later interpolations contain a reference to a wealthy ship owner who has paid his port dues and is about to sail to Takkola, Cīna, Suvannabhumi, and other ports. Takkola and Suvannabhumi were probably on the upper west coast of the Siamo-Malay peninsula; Cīna may be China. Within Suvannabhumi was a place called *Karpuradvipa*, “island of camphor”, probably a reference to Barus, northwest Sumatra, a place with which Indians were very familiar in the eleventh century; a Tamil merchant guild set up an inscription there in 1088.

Other early stories mention a princess who was cast away on Suvarnadvipa while on the way from Kataha back to India. A brahmana went to look for his lost children there. There is much more literature of this type, in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Tamil, from as far west as Gujarat. The basic idea is that “Who goes to Java/never returns/if by chance, he returns/then, for seven generations to live upon/money enough, he brings back.”<sup>134</sup>

Some Indian texts such as the *Manusmṛti* forbid brahmanas (members of the Brahmin caste) to travel by sea, but other texts allow it, although some expiatory rites are required upon return to India.<sup>135</sup> The *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*, a late Vedic text written about 800 BCE, forbade Brahmins to sail on ships, but acknowledged that residents of northwest India often ignored this rule.<sup>136</sup> The term appears in *Brhatsaṅghita*, a sixth-century work on astrology. The *Dīvyavadāna*, a collection of Avadāna literature composed sometime after the second century CE, describes the journey of a merchant named Supriya from Tamralipti to Suvannabhumi. The *Bṛhatkathaslokaśaṅgraha* by Budhaswamin, composed between the eighth and ninth centuries CE, describes the dangers of trade and navigation between India and Suvannabhumi.

According to the Myanmar chronicles *Mahayazawingyi* and *Sasanavamsa*, following the end of the Third Buddhist Council, Sona and Uttara were two of 10 elders sent by Moggaliputta Thera to spread Buddhism to nine regions, one of them being Suvannabhumi (Sudhammati). In this case the chroniclers imply that the term referred to the general area of Burma.

Suvarnadvipa was a common name for Sumatra used by Seasians and Indians such as Atīśa. It appears in the Nalanda copperplate inscription of Devapaladeva of the mid-ninth century which records the donation of five villages for the upkeep of a monastery established there by Maharaja Balaputradeva, lord of Suvarnadvipa. The term “Suvarnarūpyakadvīpa” appears in the *Ramayana*, the written form of which was established around 200 CE, although it is possible that some interpolations later found their way into the text.

## SEASIANS IN INDIA

Indian texts give evidence that Seasians visited India. We can assume that the monasteries for Sumatran monks in Nalanda and Nagarjunakonda mentioned in official proclamations received numerous Sumatran visitors. In literary genres, a *Jataka* text mentions traders from Suvannabhumi in northwest India (*Jatakamālā* no. XIV); the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, an eleventh-century collection of stories, contains numerous references to Seasia, including four young merchants from Kataha who came to India.<sup>137</sup> By 1973 it was possible for an Indian scholar to write that “Indian trade and traders have been divested of their role as the prime disseminators of Indian culture among the ruling aristocracies of Southeast Asia”.<sup>138</sup>

In Classic Cambodia, names of *varnas*, or “castes”, in India were used as titles to be conferred on members of the elite. The thirteenth-century Chinese author Ma Duanlin, compiling information from much older sources, noted that the term “brahmana” was a title for elite males in Lin Yi, central Vietnam.<sup>139</sup> Thus in most cases it is impossible to be sure that we are dealing with apostate brahmanas from India instead of locally born people who obtained the title brahmana without being born into that caste.

The vast waters of the Bay of Bengal were no obstacles to traffic and transportation by the late Preclassic. The spread of the idea of Brahmanism began in northwest India, moved into the south, and jumped across the bay in one great leap. It was the ideas which were all important, not the individuals involved. The combination of central Asian (Sanskritic), late Hellenic (Mauryan), Gangetic, and Deccan cultures moved smoothly into the Seasian lowlands where these symbolic ways of making sense of the human condition achieved yet more elaborate and aesthetically pleasing forms.

## THE ISTHMIAN REGION AND EARLY MARITIME TRADE

The northern half of the Siamo-Malay Peninsula stretches over 700 kilometers, from Songkhla to Phetburi, or approximately 7° to 12° north latitude, and averages about 50 kilometers in width. People were crossing this peninsula at various locations by 2,000 years ago. Six major transpeninsular routes exist in south Thailand and five more cross the 650-kilometer-long section of the peninsula south of the Malaysia-Thailand border. The routes followed river valleys as far into the highlands as possible, so that much of the distance could be traversed by boat.

The Thai section is narrower, has lower mountains, and has a monsoonal climate with more open vegetation than the Malaysian section. During the Classic this subregion (which we call “Kra” for short) was mainly populated by Austroasiatic (Mon-Khmer) speakers with an Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) speaking minority, who lived in a collection of mandalas (see “A framework for analysis of Classic Seasia”, Chapter 1). Very few local historical sources have survived in the Kra subregion. The bulk of our written texts are in Chinese. Archaeology has begun but has far to go before it can provide a detailed picture of settlement patterns, economy, and artistic development.

In the third century, the Chinese believed that the Kra subregion was incorporated into the empire of Funan, ruled from the Mekong Delta. We have no independent evidence that large-scale conquests of territory occurred in Seasia in the Protoclassic. The possibility that Funan was not an empire such as the Chinese envisioned it will be explored in subsequent sections. In lieu of any inscriptions which might confirm such a relationship, we examine the archaeological and historical evidence for specific sites while deferring judgment about political relationships among them.

## DUNSUN

Dunsun was the northernmost place in the Kra subregion mentioned in Chinese sources, and was one of 10 kingdoms supposedly conquered by Funan in the third century. It may have been in the area of the Tenasserim River transpeninsular route. The western terminus of this route is the Mergui Archipelago,

where a sea nomad population known as the Moken still exists. Boats are still the main focus of their lives.<sup>140</sup> They move with the seasons in small flotillas. They are known as expert collectors of birds' nests, pearls, wax, and resin, commodities which have been in high demand in China for 2,000 years. Their mode of exchange is traditional: They attach themselves to a patron, usually Malay or Chinese, who serves as their middleman with the international market.<sup>141</sup>

Chinese information on Dunsun comes from several sources. One is the *Liang Shu*, written in the fifth century. Another is the *Taiping Yu Lan*, which was compiled from 977 to 983, but quotes information from the *Nan Zhou Yiwu Chi*, written in the third century.<sup>142</sup> Historians have speculated that the name "Dunsun" could be a Chinese effort to transcribe "Five Cities" from proto-Mon language. The port's trade relations supposedly extended to Parthia, India, and north Vietnam. The Chinese were impressed by Dunsun's trading connections: "All the countries beyond the frontier come and go in pursuit of trade. . . . At this mart East and West meet together. . . . Precious goods and rare merchandise, there is nothing which is not there."<sup>143</sup> They also recorded that foreigners resided there, including 500 "hu" families, referring to Persians and Sogdians, as well as 1,000 Brahmanas from India who intermarried with the local population. This is the first reference to Brahmanas in Seasia. Funeral practices were described as complex: some were cremated; some corpses were exposed to be eaten by birds, after which the bones were thrown into the ocean. No archaeological site has yet been linked to Dunsun.

## PANPAN

The kingdom of Panpan appears in the section of the *History of the Liang Dynasty* which describes Funan's conquests. Tang dynasty sources specify that it was located southwest of *Lin Yi*, across a small sea (probably the Gulf of Thailand). It was next to Langkasuka, the Patani area on the southeast coast of the Kra subregion. Panpan was quite active diplomatically; it sent at least eight and possibly as many as 12 missions to the Liang, Sui, and Tang dynasties from the fifth to the early seventh centuries, the last in 635.<sup>144</sup>

An author named Ma Duanlin compiled a text known as *Wen xian Tung kao* in about 1254, published in 1319, in which he quoted earlier sources which are now lost. He said that Panpan like Dunsun had many Brahmanas from India. Their reason for coming to Panpan was to follow a king in his search for wealth; this sounds more like a "stranger king" myth than a real record. According to the *History of the Liang*, sometime before 424 a Brahmin from India named Kaundinya went to Panpan and thence to Funan where he was proclaimed king. Elsewhere Ma Duanlin remarks that *Brahmana* was a title conferred on all men among the elite of another kingdom, demonstrating that the word does not always indicate people from a certain caste.

Panpan sent at least 16 missions to China between 424/453 and 635, but there is no record of a Chinese mission to Panpan<sup>145</sup> so the Chinese account is based on hearsay. It is nevertheless quite detailed. The population lived in settlements surrounded by wooden palisades near the seashore. They had arrows with stone points but iron spears, suggesting that warfare may have been a factor. The king's name may have included the title *Yang*, a Malayo-Polynesian word. Some people who were not highly respected

studied “the classic of the Asura [demon] king” and were vegetarian. These may have been devotees of a *rishi*, or sage, and/or Siva. More important were 10 Buddhist cloisters with monks and nuns. Tribute presented to China in the sixth century included precious Buddhist relics, painted stupas, and bodhi tree leaves.

The disappearance of the kingdom from historical sources at the beginning of the Early Classic period is mysterious. Either the kingdom’s name changed, or the Chinese changed their name for it. It may have become Tambralingga, the capital of which was Nakhon Si Thammarat. The reference to Panpan’s connections with India suggests that it may have been located near the eastern terminus of a transpeninsular route. A pass leads from Nakhon Si Thammarat to the Trang River on the west coast. Slightly farther north is another pass, the Khirira River route, which leads from Chaiya on the east coast to the Takuapa River over an elevation of 600 meters. Both locations, Chaiya and Nakhon Si Thammarat, have yielded abundant archaeological evidence that they were important ports in the Protoclassic.

## VISNU IMAGES AND BUDDHIST STUPAS

The oldest datable Brahmanical statues in Seasia portray Visnu. Stanley O’Connor proposed that the oldest Seasian statue is a Visnu image from Chaiya, Surat Thani Province, which he dated on stylistic grounds to the fourth century CE.<sup>146</sup> This image was discovered in a Buddhist Wat in the early twentieth century.<sup>147</sup> At least three and possibly eight other similar images are known to exist in Seasia. The closest counterparts include one from southeast Cambodia, and two from the Vietnamese side of the border, one of which may have come from Oc-èo. These hint at a connection with Funan. Five others (two from Suphanburi, one from Lopburi, two more from south Vietnam) are potential members of the group, but for various reasons this cannot be confirmed. In addition to this particular form of Visnu, three other Visnu statues of slightly different style have been found in Nakhon Si Thammarat, 50 kilometers south of Chaiya. Art historians continue to debate the precise dating of the statues; some argue that they are 100 to 200 years later than O’Connor’s estimate. The Chaiya statue possibly developed independently rather than being inspired by Indian examples. Nevertheless, “few other early Southeast Asian stone sculptures seem to have such close comparisons in the corpus of Indian art”;<sup>148</sup> the Chaiya image may be the model for all later mitred Visnus in Seasia. At the end of the Protoclassic, Seasian sculptors began to evolve their own styles.

Most other archaeological discoveries in Chaiya date from the Early Classic. In addition to the mitred Visnu, small clay votive tablets and miniature stupas have also been found at Chaiya and Nakhon Si Thammarat. Jacq-Hergoualc’h believed that these date from no earlier than the sixth century,<sup>149</sup> which would disqualify them from being classed with those referred to earlier, but it is significant that the practice of making them was known at both sites. Another important statue which indicates the significance of Buddhism in the Chaiya region is a stone Avalokitesvara which may have been carved in the sixth century, making it the oldest image of this popular deity in Seasia. Three other statues of Avalokitesvara found in and around Chaiya also have been stylistically dated to the sixth or early seventh century.<sup>150</sup>

Nine other Visnu statues have also been found in the Isthmus of Kra, indicating the popularity of this deity in the Protoclassic and Early Classic. Few Siva linggas have been found in the Chaiya area, though one *ekamukhalingga*, “one-faced lingga”, found 20 kilometers north of Chaiya is an elaborate example which may date from the sixth century.<sup>151</sup>

Other Brahmanical statuary in south Thailand is not common. One statue, of the elephant-headed god Ganesa from Satingphra, may be the oldest in Seasia, if its estimated date of the sixth century is correct.<sup>152</sup>

## LANGKASUKA

Chinese sources describe the kingdom of Langkasuka as lying south of Panpan. The most likely location for it is modern Patani. An overland route leads up the Patani River, then south across the mountains, then west along the Muda and Merbok Rivers to Kedah.

The first reference to this kingdom dates from 515 when King Bhadatta of *Lang-ya-xiu* sent a mission to the Liang court. The embassy told the Chinese that Langkasuka’s territory took 30 days to cross, and that its capital was a citadel with walls and gates. Their people wore gold jewellery, and the women wore scarves decorated with gems. Houses were pavilions with double doors built on top of terraces. The kingdom sent further embassies to China in 523, 531, and 568. Its history is nine centuries long; it survived into the Postclassic. Langkasuka envoys told the Liang officials who interviewed them that their kingdom was already several hundred years old in the sixth century.

Langkasuka was an important stopover for Chinese Buddhists on pilgrimages to India. A *Jataka* story mentions “two ports of Suvarṇabhūmi, Laṅkāśobha and Kaṭahadvīpa”, suggesting that the two ports were indeed linked by an overland route. A Malay chronicle (the *Hikayat Marong Mahawangsa*) even claims that Langkasuka was Kedah’s original name.

Sites near Yarang, 15 kilometers inland from Patani, have yielded significant remains in an area of 96 hectares. It was originally thought that the entire site was ramparted and moated, but as in northeast Thailand it has been determined that the “ramparts” are recent agricultural adjustments of the landscape, and not ancient fortifications.<sup>153</sup> There are traces of smaller ramparts, however. Research has yielded ruins in the hamlets of Ban Prawæ (two), Ban Wat (20), and Ban Chale (11). Indications are that these settlements were connected by artificial channels across the delta of the Patani River, originally an estuary which gradually silted up, forcing the residents to augment natural drainage and transportation routes.

Three brick structures have so far been excavated at Ban Chale. These had redented ground plans almost 10 by 10 meters. The excavations revealed a significant quantity of Buddhist artifacts, including statues of Buddha and Avalokitesvara, stupas and votive tablets, and stucco decorations, including *kudu* images. Some of the clay tablets are inscribed with Buddhist credos provisionally dated to the sixth century “at the latest”.<sup>154</sup> Peter Skilling has characterized the language used for one of the credos as “Sanskritized Middle Indic closely related to Pali”.

A Sassanid coin dated between 457 and approximately 483 in a local private collection hints at early connections with the Indian Ocean. Most of the statuary dates to the seventh through ninth centuries,



but one bronze Buddha found in Narathiwat, 50 kilometers south of Patani, may date from the sixth century.<sup>155</sup>

## THA CHANA

Tha Chana lies in Surat Thani Province on the east coast of the peninsula, 100 kilometers south of Khao Sam Kaeo. It has been heavily looted and only cursorily surveyed. There is evidence that the site was connected to the Indian Ocean trade, including an image of the god Bacchus dated to circa 50 CE and Indian fine ware pottery. Waste material from bead making probably used imported Indian glass. Contact with the South China Sea is visible in fragments of at least seven glass vessels of a type found in tombs of the Han period in the Gulf of Tonkin, and Han dynasty pottery. The site probably was occupied in the late Preclassic and early Protoclassic.<sup>156</sup>

## KHAO SAM KAEO

Khao Sam Kaeo seems to have been most active in the late centuries BCE, but continued to be occupied in the Protoclassic. Two or possibly three stones with Brahmi script from approximately 100 BCE to 100 CE seem to record owners' names. A gold seal inscribed in Sanskrit has been palaeographically dated to the fifth or sixth century.<sup>157</sup>

## KHLONG THOM (KHUAN LUK PAT), KRABI

Khlong Thom (Khuan Luk Pat), Krabi Province, is the most significant Protoclassic site yet discovered on the west coast of the Kra subregion. It lies 200 kilometers south of the narrowest point of the isthmus and 20 kilometers inland, on a river. The site has been severely looted; information comes mainly from artifacts in private collections. One of the more fascinating aspects of the site is the amount of Mediterranean material found here. This includes stone and glass seals of the Roman Empire with such motifs as a pastoral scene dated to about 50 CE, fighting cocks and the goddess Fortuna in a style dated to about 100 CE, and a satyr dated 200 CE. Three bronze pendants, one of which imitates coins of the emperor Tiberius (reigned 14–37 CE) may have been made locally; a stone mould for this purpose has been found at the site.<sup>158</sup>

Artifacts in a local monastery include glass collar beads similar to examples found at the south Indian port of Arikamedu, an important center for Mediterranean traders in the first and second centuries CE, and what may be an Indian-made glass container. One seal bears a Sanskrit inscription *data vayam*, "This item is on offer." Another depicts a deity holding a cornucopia, similar to a motif found on Roman coins. One Roman coin has been discovered here. At the nearby site of Khao Kanab Nam, a clay votive tablet resembling a late fifth-century type found in Sarnath, north India, was found.<sup>159</sup>

There is considerable evidence to support the inference that craftsmen at Khuan Luk Pat made jewelry of tin, semi-precious stone, and glass. A Tamil inscription on a touchstone for assaying gold is inscribed in Brahmi script of the third century: *perum patan kal*, “the [touch] stone of the great goldsmith”.<sup>160</sup> Hundreds of gold coins, possibly made here, have a conch/*srivatsa* motif also known from south-central Myanmar. These are made from gold foil and weigh a mere half a gram. They are very fragile, but a numismatist has suggested that they were used in commerce.<sup>161</sup>

## CHAMPA

### Champa and Lin Yi

Most historians consider the kingdom of Lin Yi to be the precursor of the later kingdoms of Champa, which encompassed the coastal territory from approximately the ceasefire line of 1954 north of Quang Tri to the northern edge of the Mekong Delta. Although “Lin Yi” became the standard Chinese term for the Cham area of southern Vietnam until it was replaced by *Huan wang* in 758, then *Zhan cheng*, and Champapura in 877, not all scholars are convinced that the Cham in Quangnam were descendants of those people whom the Chinese had called Lin Yi earlier.<sup>162</sup> By the eighth century the main Cham political centers were located at Nhatrang and Phanrang.<sup>163</sup> One of the kingdoms in north-central Vietnam which sent embassies to Luoyang in 286 CE, Quduqian, may have had contact with the Philippines; a Chinese source says that it was in communication with an island to the east where gold was found.<sup>164</sup> This relationship across the South China Sea between the Cham and the Philippines resurfaced in eleventh-century Chinese sources.

Ma Duanlin in a report written in the thirteenth century but referring to around 400 CE said that Lin Yi people built houses on platforms of brick coated with plaster. They cremated the dead; rulers’ ashes were put into gold urns and threw them into the ocean, commoners’ ashes were put into earthenware jars and thrown into rivers. These customs differ from what is known of Vietnam. No traces of such houses have yet been found in southern Vietnam. Between 284 and 287, Lin Yi, together with 21 other polities including Funan, sent tribute missions to China. Between 446 and 589, Lin Yi sent more than 17 missions. In 491, the Qi court bestowed several titles on the Lin Yi king, Fan Danggenchun, including Commissioner with Special Powers, Commander-in-Chief of all Military Affairs in the Coastal Region, King of Lin Yi, and Annam Jiangjun (General of Pacified South). The last title was important partially because whereas several Lin Yi kings were bestowed this title, only one Funan king (Jayavarman) received it.

### Vocanh

The oldest known text written in Southeast Asia was found at Vocanh in Nha Trang, near where the important sanctuary of Po Nagar now stands. It is written in a southern Indian script which can be dated

to the third century, on a rectangular granite pillar 2.5 meters tall, found in association with enormous bricks measuring 118 by 35 by 8 centimeters, probably part of a religious sanctuary. It mentions a king with the title *Srimara*; a ruler of Funan mentioned in Chinese sources and another in India at this period used this title. The inscription does not mention any kingdom, and since it is written in Sanskrit, the ethnicity of the author cannot be determined. The king who set up the inscription was not Srimara, but rather his descendant, whose name is not found in the surviving portion of the text.

A long text was inscribed on three faces of this pillar. Unfortunately, at least the first six lines have almost completely disappeared on one face, and the first eight lines on the second side. On the third face only a few characters are legible. The surviving portions of the text contain such phrases as “compassion for the creatures”, “the priests, of course, who have drunk the ambrosia of the hundred words of the king”; “the ornament. . .by that which is the joy of the family of the daughter of the grandson of king Srimara. . .has been ordained”; “those who are seated on the throne”, “that which has to do with silver or gold”, “material treasure”, “all that is provided by me as one who is kind and useful”, “my minister Vira”, and “the edict which brings the welfare of the creatures, by the better of the two *karin*, the going and coming of this world”. The word *karin* can indicate both an elephant’s trunk and tax. Ancient South-east Asian authors often used words with double meanings which can create refined literary effects, but obscure the text’s meaning. In this case, the author probably meant that the elephant and the king are both generous donors. Elephants give the liquor secreted from their foreheads when they are *mada*, that is, rutting; rulers give gifts.

One epigrapher discerned Buddhist significance in the inscription, but Jean Filliozat noted that one expression is found here and in the *Ramayana*. Buddhists considered compassion for creatures (*karuna*) as a “Brahmanic disposition”; at this time the “Brahmanists” of southern India considered *karuna* to be a supreme grace of Siva. Filliozat concluded that the inscription was therefore evidence of Hinduism.<sup>165</sup> Given the inscription’s location, it is logical to associate it with one of the lesser kingdoms which sent missions to China in 286 CE.

## DEVANIKA AND OVERLAND TRADE

An inscription found at Wat Luang Khao in Champassak, southern Laos, is the oldest Sanskrit inscription in a Khmer area. It is dated palaeographically to the fifth century and erected by King Devanika, who came from far away to this area where Wat Phu was later built to be “installed in supreme royal power by the auspicious Sri Linggaparvata”. He underwent an initiation which consecrated him as a king of kings, *maharajadhiraja*, then built a bathing place in honor of Siva named Kuruksetra, after the site of an epic battle in India.<sup>166</sup> Michael Vickery concluded that King Devanika came from the nearby Dangrek Mountains, but John Guy<sup>167</sup> speculates that he may have come from the My Son area of Champa, which is connected to the Wat Phu area by a well-known overland route.

Early twentieth-century explorers in Cham lands emphasized the continued importance of commerce between the coastal plain and hinterland dwellers who provided forest products to people in the coastal plain in return for iron, salt, and cloth.<sup>168</sup> A symbiotic relationship evolved, similar to one which is

attested for Sumatra. Southworth employed the upstream-downstream model to reconstruct the Cham relationship with their hinterland, but he notes that the Cham case deviates in several basic elements from Bronson's model, in particular the well-documented existence of overland trade routes between river valleys, the locations of political centers in the middle of river courses, and the fertile rice-growing areas along these rivers. He postulates that battles for control of access to Mu Gia Pass may have been fought in the fourth and early fifth centuries.<sup>169</sup> An alternative model more akin to a central-place distribution seems more applicable to both Sumatra and Champa. (See "Srivijaya: At the crossroads of the world" and "Champa: The northern phase", Chapter 5.)

## SINGAPURA

The first of several Seasian kingdoms to use the name Singapura was founded in the valley of the Thu Bon River near modern Hoi An around 400 CE. An inscription written in Cham from Dong Yên Chau near My Son, is the oldest in any Southeast Asian language.<sup>170</sup> The inscription, set up by King Bhavavarman I, praises the "divine *naga*" (serpent deity) of the king. Apart from this inscription, Cham inscriptions were all written in Sanskrit until the seventh century; thereafter, Sanskrit was used for religious passages, and Cham for mundane matters. There are 20 more Sanskrit inscriptions from the fifth to eighth centuries in this area, all but two in or near My Son.<sup>171</sup>

Bhavavarman's palace was built on a hill now called Buu Trau in Tra Kieu, about 20 kilometers from the coast, which overlooks a tributary of the Thu Bon River and a broad plain. Archaeological research here has yielded much information, including indications of early temples and other structures from the early Protoclassic. Subsequent kings of this period were Vijayavarman and his son Rudravarman, who received recognition from China in 530, and sent a mission there in 534. He attacked the Chinese provinces of north Vietnam in 543 but was defeated. The first sanctuary built at My Son, Bhadresvara, was probably destroyed by fire during his reign. He was succeeded by his son Sambhuvarman, who ruled until 629. He sent tribute to the new Sui rulers of China in 595, but his capital at Tra Kieu was sacked by the Chinese in the early seventh century. Sambhuvarman survived and sent three missions to the Tang, who succeeded the Sui. He rebuilt a temple at My Son named Sambhubhadesvara. He was succeeded by his son Kandarpadharma and his grandson Prabhasadharma, who was assassinated in 645 by a minister.

Most scholars now concur with the idea that Champa was never a unified kingdom, but a "sort of federation" of *puras* which consisted of harbors where foreigners could moor, load and unload, sometimes on an island such as Cu Lao Cham off Quang Nam. Seaports were built at river mouths, but walled royal compounds were located farther upstream and temple complexes at the feet of the mountains. A sixth-century Chinese observer described a royal enceinte, possibly at Tra Kieu: it had brick ramparts 6 *li* and 170 paces (about 3 kilometers) in circumference, with a brick wall with square slits, on top of which was a stockade with pavilions; the total height is given as 20 meters. Inside the wall, which had 13 gates, were more than 2,100 houses.<sup>172</sup> Tra Kieu comprised an area of 75 hectares enclosed in a wall.

## MY SON

My Son lies 25 kilometers inland from Tra Kieu, at about 100 meters above sea level in a narrow valley surrounded by mountains. French scholars first became aware of the site in 1889. My Son was accorded World Heritage status in 1999. This temple complex was patronized by many rulers, and is of great importance to the history of Southeast Asian art. The first known record of the erection of a Siva *lingga* in Southeast Asia is found in a fourth-century inscription there issued by Bhadravarman. Three other inscriptions found in the vicinity are in Sanskrit and dated to the fifth century. The first Southeast Asian inscription to use the name Champa also comes from this site, and dates from the sixth century.

Protohistoric buildings on the site seem to have been made of perishable materials. Bhadravarman's temple is recorded as having been destroyed by fire in the sixth century. Brick and stone temples were built at My Son from the beginning of the Early Classic until the thirteenth century. My Son was in more or less constant use for as many as nine centuries, one of the longest histories of any site in Southeast Asia. My Son was closely associated with the royal center located at Tra Kieu called Amaravati.

## ART

Whereas Khmer art can be seen as following a clear line of development, Cham art is like "a chain with links made of different alloys". Claeys suggested that Champa should be considered as a cultural entity fragmented into multiple "provinces".<sup>173</sup>

Some of the earliest Protohistoric art in Southeast Asia is found in the Thu Bon valley. A statue of a male figure seated on the coils of a *naga* resembles later iconography of Buddha protected by Mucalinda, but the human here is definitely not Buddha. He may represent a *yaksa* connected with Kuwera. The oldest inscription in a Southeast Asian language from the same area refers to the *naga* of the king, who presides over a spring.<sup>174</sup>

A special kind of cover for the tip of a *lingga* is called a *kosa*. The first inscriptions which refer to commissioning these originate from sixth-century Champa. None have been found in archaeological excavations, but several are in private collections. Most of these are attributed to the My Son area.<sup>175</sup>

## ARCHAEOLOGY

Controversy surrounds the theory that the Cham people were the descendants of those who created the Sa Huynh culture, which is found in the same area. There are late Sa Huynh sites near Tra Kieu. Whereas French archaeologists were not convinced of such a continuity, Vietnamese archaeologists believe that Cham civilization emerged from a Sa Huynh foundation, based in part in comparisons between Sa Huynh and Tra Kieu artifacts excavated by the University of Ha Noi in 1990.<sup>176</sup> Research at sites such as Go Cam near Hoi An has shown that the Sa Huynh civilization had access to Chinese artifacts such

as a sword possibly wrapped in silk, coins from the Han Dynasty, Chinese sealings, roof tiles, mirrors, stamped pottery, and other artifacts. Romano-Indian rouletted ware sherds, blue glass cullet, beads, and a glass ear spool demonstrate that the Sahuynh people also had contact with India.

Evidence of Chinese cultural influence in the Protoclassic period is strong at Tra Kieu.<sup>177</sup> Chinese-style roof tiles with decorated ends were made there, as were *kendis*, ritual pouring vessels of a form originally imported from India, made at Angkor Borei, and made in local styles at different times and places in Southeast Asia. The examples from Tra Kieu are about a century older than the oldest dated examples from Oc-èo, and may thus be the oldest yet discovered in Southeast Asia.<sup>178</sup> The degree of Chinese cultural input at Tra Kieu was surprisingly strong. Further excavations at other sites are needed to determine whether Protoclassic Tra Kieu was unique or typical in this respect. Excavations at Go Cam, 3.5 kilometers east of Tra Kieu between 2000 and 2003 revealed another site where a Protoclassic stratum overlies a Sahuynh layer, the first such sequence yet found in central Vietnam which supports the hypothesis of continuity between Sahuynh and Cham culture.

## CENTRAL AND NORTHEAST THAILAND: PRELUDE TO DVARAVATI

The transition from prehistory to history in Seasia is a very important threshold, but little research on the timing, causes, and effects of this transformation has been conducted.<sup>179</sup> It was once believed that the mounded sites of the Chao Phraya valley were older than those in Khorat, and that therefore Khorat must have been a backward area into which influence from the Chao Phraya moved.<sup>180</sup> This is a good example of the fallacy of projecting current political and economic conditions into the past. Research has demonstrated that the mound sites in Khorat are in general older than those in the Chao Phraya valley, and that those in eastern Cambodia and western Vietnam are older still. Thus, rather than a simple case of diffusion from an area which was perceived to have always been a center of development to one which has always been peripheral, it is necessary to examine each area as a separate case.

There is a significant degree of continuity in the sites of central and northeast Thailand; many were occupied in the late Preclassic, continued to grow in the Protoclassic, and persisted into the Dvaravati era (Early Classic) and Lopburi period (Middle Classic).<sup>181</sup> Burial continued to be used as a means of disposing of the dead during the Protoclassic and most of the Early Classic. Long-distance trade with India and the east coast of Vietnam continued to flourish.<sup>182</sup> At Ban Don Ta Phet an “elite burial enclave” formed, suggesting emergence of social stratification.<sup>183</sup> Ban Don Ta Phet’s location at the entrance to the Three Pagodas Pass to south Myanmar was an asset.

## COINAGE

The first locally made coins appeared in mainland Seasia in the Protoclassic. They strongly suggest the existence of an exchange network dominated by speakers of Mon-Khmer languages. We cannot tell whether objects which resemble modern coins were coins, medallions, or tokens. Some may have been



used in specific contexts such as paying tribute to rulers or donations to temples, but not in daily markets. Even the smallest silver and gold coins are not practical for use in buying and selling daily necessities. Low-value coins which are practical for daily transactions did not appear in Seasia until the twelfth or thirteenth century, and then they were imported from China. We do not have sufficient information to determine the functions of the early coin-like objects, even though they closely resemble modern coins. In this book they are called coins, since the weight of evidence indicates that most of these objects did play a role analogous to money in modern times, even though they deviate in several physical aspects from coins in other parts of the world. With only one exception, Seasian coins from the Classic period bear no inscriptions or dates. Only one type of early Seasian coin bears the name of a kingdom. Very few coins have been found in archaeological excavations. It is necessary to rely on secondary sources of information, including collections of antiquities sometimes given to Buddhist monasteries by devotees, and collectors.

The oldest examples of coins in Seasia were made around 454 to 476; they were decorated with a motif called *srivatsa*, a Sanskrit term for an auspicious sign, and a conch shell.<sup>184</sup> This may have had some connection with the use of conch shells as a medium of exchange in early mainland Southeast Asia. They have been found in the area of Ho Chi Minh City, in central Myanmar, and northeast India. The first literary reference to the use of coins in a Seasian context comes from the *History of the Liang* in sixth-century China, when there is a reference to “buying” foreign commodities rather than bartering for them.<sup>185</sup>

The most widespread coin motif in Protoclassic Seasia is called the “rising sun”. Coins with this motif are found in Thailand, Cambodia, and Funan. They were almost certainly made in more than one place, and in several denominations: one, one-quarter, and one-eighth units. This strongly favours the hypothesis that they served an economic rather than symbolic function. One type is largely concentrated in Myanmar; another is found over a wide area, from central Thailand to Cambodia, but is fairly common in Myanmar too. They are mainly found in the Shan-inhabited areas of the highlands, rather than sites such as Sri Ksetra, which are associated with the group known as the Pyu. (Another type of coin, decorated with conch and *srivatsa*, has been found at both Sri Ksetra in Myanmar and central Thailand.) The largest known hoard of this type of coin was found at Ban Moklaan, near Nakhon Si Thammarat, south Thailand, where several hundred rising sun coins, including half- and one-quarter-cut segments, were found.<sup>186</sup>

## PROTOCLASSIC SITES IN CENTRAL THAILAND

### U Thong

Sites with Roman-style artifacts lie in a belt stretching across the area of central and eastern Thailand once inhabited by Mon-Khmer speakers, which is quite congruent with the area of early coin distribution. U Thong is one of the most important sites in this region. It lies in Suphanburi Province, 50 kilometers west of the Tha Chin distributary of the Chao Phraya Delta, about 120 kilometers north of

the present coastline. Boisselier suggested that U Thong might have been Funan's capital, but Bronson (1979) disputed this, because U-Thong is smaller than Oc-èo. Higham agreed that U Thong and Oc-èo share many characteristics.<sup>187</sup> It is surrounded by a rectangular moat 1,690 by 840 meters and a stone wall on a clay rampart.

Important artifacts dating from the Protoclassic period at U Thong include a copper coin of the Roman emperor Victorinus (268–270 CE), two-headed animal pendants which are distributed from western Thailand to coastal sites in south Vietnam where they are associated with Sahuynh artifacts. These overlap in distribution with *lingling-o* spread over sites from south Vietnam and also on the other side of the South China Sea in the Philippines.<sup>188</sup>

In addition to imported items, excavations at Tha Muang, a neighbourhood of U Thong, in the 1960s yielded pottery with patterns identical to those found at Oc-èo, spouts of *kendis*, and much iron slag. Five radiocarbon dates include one in the late third century BCE, one in the first century CE, one in the second century CE, and two in the mid-fourth century CE.<sup>189</sup> There is thus excellent evidence that U Thong was a significant Protoclassic site which continued to be prominent in the Early Classic, but there is no obvious evidence that it was politically or culturally part of Funan.

Other sites with Protoclassic imported items in central Thailand include Ban Tha Kae, which has yielded stamp seals and a gold bead. Muang Phra Rot, in the Bang Pakong valley, northeast Thailand, is usually thought to date from a later period, based on pottery, but moulds for tin amulets like those of Oc-èo indicate that the site was probably also the scene of earlier habitation.<sup>190</sup>

## Phong Tuek

A “Graeco-Roman” lamp and a Buddha statue in early South Indian (Amaravati) style were found at Phong Tuek in a small square brick building. Çedès thought the Buddha image was imported from India. Later research has shown that the lamp may have been imported from Byzantium in the seventh or eighth centuries.<sup>191</sup>

## Chansen

Chansen is 150 kilometers from the Gulf of Siam, far from places which Funan has been said to have conquered. Nevertheless the material culture found here displays numerous parallels with Oc-èo. The site's main period of occupation is the Protoclassic. Artifacts found at Chansen include tin and gold jewellery, and stone moulds for making it; earthenware stamps, perhaps for printing textiles; small bronze bells decorated with filigree spirals; and coins with *trisula* (trident)-like designs. All these artifact types are also found at U Thong, and all but the coins are found in Phases III to IV at Chansen. Phase III extends from 200/250 to 450/500 CE, and Phase IV from 450/500 to 600/650. Bronson believes that there was “a status-conscious and to some extent foreign-oriented elite class” at Chansen, but evidence of foreign trade at Chansen during Phases III and IV is limited to two artifacts from China, one item

possibly from Myanmar, several objects which had been made at Oc-èo, and eight bowls of a type which was made in Sri Lanka. In Phase II, an Indian-style ivory comb was found, indicating that Chansen had contact, probably indirect, with South Asia.<sup>192</sup>

## Phromthin Tai

Phromthin Tai in Lop Buri Province is a stratified multicomponent site 20 kilometers from Lopburi town, 12 kilometers from Khao Wong Prachan, where copper was smelted in the second millennium BCE. The site's history is divided into four phases; Phase I is estimated to date from 700 to 500 BCE. One grave from this phase was found, which yielded one calibrated date of 1211 BCE to 73 CE. Excavation began in 1991. The site was said to have been surrounded by a moat, but that has now disappeared.

Phase II corresponds to the Iron Age (500 BCE–1 CE) and the Protoclassic period (1–500 CE). Artifacts from this period include iron tools, spindle whorls, and imported items (glass beads and carnelian and agate beads). High-tin bowls were probably also imported. This phase is comparable to Chansen and late Ban Don Ta Phet. This phase has yielded six dates between  $1810 \pm 220$  (357 BCE–645 CE) and  $3110 \pm 230$  (1912–819 BCE). Occupation continued into Phase III: the sixth to ninth centuries CE, the “Dvaravati period”. No break in the sequence between Phases II and III was observed. Fine-grained orange and buff pottery used as burial offerings in Preclassic and Protoclassic graves has also been found at Khu Bua (Ratchburi), Sap Champa (Lopburi), and Nakhon Pathom, suggesting that it was made at a limited number of places.<sup>193</sup>

## Nakhon Pathom

Nakhon Pathom is one of the most important Protoclassic and Early Classic sites in Thailand. It covers 7.2 square kilometers and was surrounded by a moat 50 to 60 meters wide. It lies about 2 kilometers from the edge of the Chao Phraya Delta. A Protoclassic seal engraved with Prakrit *varapata(na)* in Brahmi script has been found here, as well as an early silver coin with conch shell motif, and another with the text *Sri Dvaravati Svava Punya* (in a private collection). Local looters were attracted to the site by glass and carnelian beads.

Excavation in 2009 revealed a Protoclassic phase with Phimai Black pottery and other ceramics datable by comparison with Chansen and Phum Snay and Angkor Borei, Cambodia, contemporary with Phase II of U Thong.<sup>194</sup>

## Ban Khu Muang

Ban Khu Muang is enclosed in a moat measuring 650 by 750 meters, and is located 1 kilometer west of the Chao Phraya. Many brick temple foundations cluster around the moated area. Four phases have

been identified; the oldest is associated with Oc-èo style tin jewellery, bronze, and pottery, implying a date in the period 300 to 550 CE.<sup>195</sup>

At Wat Chom Chuen, Si Satchanalai, Sukhothai Province, 15 burials were recovered beneath Dvaravati architecture, in a stratum radiocarbon-dated between CE 250 and 450. Grave goods were sparse, but included terracotta figurines and paddles, glass and stone beads, and one small iron object, possibly a blade, with a male skeleton.<sup>196</sup>

## NORTHEAST THAILAND

David Welch has pointed out the lack of evidence for long-distance trade in northeast Thailand/Phimai in the late Preclassic/Protoclassic. No Funan-style artifacts are found in Phimai or the upper Mun River valley. On the other hand, Phimai Black pottery is found in much of the upper Mun valley, as well as tools of stone from the fringes of the Khorat Plateau.<sup>197</sup>

It is, however, necessary to note the Wat Luang Kao stele (K. 365, 450–500 CE).<sup>198</sup> The inscription, less than 5 kilometers from Wat Phu in southern Laos, was ordered by a *mahārājādhirāja* named Śrī Devāṇika. It was found in a huge complex of earth walls inside which are many foundations. It mentions the consecration of a pilgrimage site (*mahatirtha*) named Kuruksetra. Other nearby inscriptions (K. 1173 and K. 1174) were ordered by Mahendravarman (late sixth to early seventh centuries, end of the Protoclassic). A total of 16 inscriptions attributed to him are found in the same area and up to 70 kilometers north near the confluence with the Mun.<sup>199</sup>

## WALLED SETTLEMENTS IN MYANMAR'S DRY ZONE

Walled settlements in Myanmar range from circular and round-edged quadrangular sites to sites with walls on three sides with a river on the fourth side; others have walls which can be described as trapezoidal, rhomboidal, or irregular (even amoebic-like). Dates of these sites range from the second century BCE to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but few carbon dates are available. This chapter focuses on sites typically classified as “Pyu” settlements. The earliest documented walled settlements in Myanmar, these comprise circular and rectangular sites with rounded corners, and span the period from the second century BCE to the ninth century CE. The best known are Halin, Beikthano, Maingmaw, Sri Ksetra, and Wadi; they are the largest walled settlements believed to date from what historians term the Pyu period. Burmese scholars have dated another, Tagaung, to the eighth century BCE, which would make it the oldest walled site in Myanmar, but this is conjectural, based on artifacts of “Pyu” style combined with Burmese chronicles

“Pyu” is a problematic term used to refer to people who inhabited areas of what is today Myanmar before the ninth-century migration of Burmans down the Ayeyarwadi and Thanlwin (Salween) Rivers. Information on the Pyu comes from inscriptions and Burmese chronicle tradition. Chinese sources such as *Man Shu* mention a group of people living in Myanmar and call them *Piao*, a Chinese transliteration

of *Pyu*, but suggest that the *Pyu* referred to themselves as *Tircul*.<sup>200</sup> The *Pyu* ethnocultural group is assumed to be correlated with certain types of artifacts: coins containing conch, rising sun, and *srivatsa* motifs, bricks with finger-marks or inscriptions in an undeciphered language, copper plate inscriptions, and pottery containing ashes or other mortuary items.<sup>201</sup> The presence of these artifacts in settlements containing structures such as walls, temples, and water features (e.g., tanks, reservoirs, dikes, and moats) are considered sufficient criteria to classify them as “*Pyu*” sites.

Much new data on *Pyu* culture has been acquired since 2000. In the early twentieth century, scholars succeeded in deciphering some aspects of *Pyu* writing, such as numbers and proper names, using the *Myazedi* inscription with Burmese, Mon, *Pyu*, and Pali texts, but knowledge about *Pyu* language and writing remains limited. Other than the *Myazedi* (Rajakumar) inscription,<sup>202</sup> no other *Pyu* texts have been translated. Some have claimed that the *Myazedi* inscriptions can be used as a Rosetta stone, assuming that all four inscriptions are largely identical. In November 2013, four pieces of a stone inscription were found in the *Myittha* region of Mandalay. Part of it is still missing. The inscription, which is credited to King Sawlu of the Bagan period (reigned 1077–1084), contains text in six languages: Burmese, Sanskrit, *Pyu*, *Pyu* Sanskrit, Mon, and Yun.<sup>203</sup> This inscription indicates that eleventh-century Bagan’s population was diverse; the so-called “*Pyu*” sites were similar in this respect. The fact that “*Pyu*” was utilized in this inscription also calls into question the view that the *Pyu* had been replaced by the Burmans (Burmese) by this time.

Whether *Pyu* is a single archaeological unit or culture requires further archaeological research. Although the sites considered *Pyu* such as Beikthano, Halin, Sri Ksetra, Maingmaw, and Wadi display some common features, *Pyu* archaeological culture may not equal a *Pyu* ethnolinguistic group (suggesting a genetic category);<sup>204</sup> a diverse population (ethnolinguistic and genetic) may well have inhabited these sites.

If one considers the *Pyu* sites as archaeological units settled by *Pyu*-speaking peoples, then this would suggest that Burmese textual tradition was correct in suggesting that the *Pyu* were replaced by Burmese and other later migrants,<sup>205</sup> but is it true? Whether the findings of *Pyu* writing on certain artifacts can be used as evidence that the inhabitants of these sites had a single culture called “*Pyu*” has not been confirmed. The only artifacts with ethnolinguistic attributes are inscribed stones, copper plates, and certain funerary urns, as well as Chinese contemporary and later references to *Piao* (purportedly Chinese transliteration of *Pyu*), and later chronicle texts. Other archaeological characteristics such as settlement walls, water features, temples, coins, decorated bricks, and burial practices using stone urns and pottery cannot be ascribed to any ethnolinguistic group. For instance, coins bearing rising sun, conch, and *srivatsa* motifs are also found in “*Dvaravati*” sites in Thailand. Moated sites with circular or quadrangular walls are found across mainland Southeast Asia. It is possible to argue that sites form an archaeological culture rather than an ethnolinguistic unit; to do so, it would be necessary to define a polythetic list of characteristics, such as settlement walls, moats, etc., and specify a certain number of these traits which arbitrarily can be considered adequate to qualify for inclusion in the same archaeological culture.

In the following section the sites of Beikthano, Halin, Maingmaw, Sri Ksetra, and Wadi are examined according to this set of characteristics: shape and other features of settlement walls, size of the site, presence of water features, presence of architectural features such as citadels and temples, geographical

location, topographical environment (proximity to natural landmarks such as rivers, hills, or mountains), and artifacts. The possibility of devising a logical polythetic definition of an archaeological culture which could be denominated Pyu is then considered.

## BEIKTHANO

Beikthano (“Visnu City” in Burmese) is located in Taungdwingyi, Magwe Division. The site is enclosed by walls forming an irregular quadrangle, inside of which is a smaller rectangular walled area referred to as a citadel, possibly a palace. Beikthano is situated near the junction where four streams (Yin, Sadooun, Yanpe, and Tagu) meet and join the Ayeyarwadi.<sup>206</sup> Excavations have revealed 12 entrances with burned remains of wooden gates, two halls with wooden pillars, a rectangular monastery with individual cells, and stupa-like structures. The Yanpe stream south of the southern wall of Beikthano is recorded in a Burmese chronicle about King Duttabaung of Sri Ksetra who defeated Beikthano’s queen by causing the waters of the Yanpe to rise and drown her troops.<sup>207</sup> This may explain the motive for building the southern walls. Seasonal flooding of the streams was central to agriculture in the area, as it is today.

Taw Sein Ko began research at Beikthano in 1905, but excavations only began in 1959.<sup>208</sup> Surprisingly few bronze artifacts have been found here compared with other “Pyu” sites. The finds at Beikthano were predominantly structural. No “Pyu” inscriptions have been found there. Large concentrations of burial urns were excavated: 73 urns at each of two sites,<sup>209</sup> containing calcined bones and ashes. Other types of artifacts recovered included terracotta, carnelian, amber, crystal, and amethyst beads, “Pyu”-period silver coins, a Buddha image, a terracotta seal with Brahmi script, and large quantities of pottery with stamped and moulded decorations.<sup>210</sup>

## HALIN

Halin is located 50 kilometers north of Mandalay, between the Ayeyarwadi and Mu Rivers, next to a Preclassic site with bronze artifacts south of the wall and adjacent to salt fields which may have provided a major reason for the site’s development.<sup>211</sup> The orientation 15° west of magnetic north has been used to date the wall to the second century BCE; this is problematic since the site may have been oriented to local water courses; compasses did not exist at that time.<sup>212</sup> “Pyu” inscriptions on stone slabs have been palaeographically dated to the period between the fourth and ninth centuries CE.<sup>213</sup> Architectural and inscriptional remains dating to the Bagan and later periods are noted in Halin, indicating the long period of use of the site, because of its access to salt fields, natural lakes, and hot springs. A stream flows through the center of the site. Unlike other major “Pyu” sites, Halin does not have a clear citadel-palace area. Few structural remains exist. Like Beikthano, there are 12 gateways in the wall, of which only three have been excavated.

Taw Sein Ko initiated archaeological research in Halin in 1905; Myint Aung continued excavations between 1962 and 1967 and in 1996. The Directorate of Archaeology office in Mandalay carried out



further research in 1998 and 2005.<sup>214</sup> Artifacts include beads, pottery, coins, metal objects, and inscriptions. Funerary urns contained both cremated and secondary burial remains, found underneath and outside rectangular structures inside the wall. Coins are decorated with rising sun or the conch and *srivatsa* symbol. Other metal objects included bronze hand-mirrors and small gold, silver, and bronze ornaments. Metal caltrops consisting of four sharp, connected spikes were likely used to hinder the advances of enemy soldiers.<sup>215</sup> Similar artifacts have been found in Sri Ksetra.

## MAINGMAW

Maingmaw is situated in the Kyaukse region, east of the Samon River where many Preclassic sites are found. A canal ran through the site. Maingmaw was first identified from aerial photographs in the 1960s; Aung Myint carried out a survey in 1977, recording finds of finger-marked bricks and gates. An area near the center of the site is named “Nadawya”, a reference to a palace, but there is no evidence of a citadel or palace enclosure. Only one building has been recorded. Another walled site about 5 kilometers southwest is known as Pinle. Myanmar researchers believe this to be a fortress satellite of Maingmaw, analogous to walled sites surrounding Halin. Finger-marked bricks have been recorded in Pinle, but its wall is an odd shape described as a cup, bearing little resemblance to Maingmaw or any other “Pyu” sites.<sup>216</sup>

Surface finds in Maingmaw include silver coins, stone moulds for casting small ornaments, a gold *makara* armlet, terracotta and stone beads, a silver bowl with Pyu writing, urns, and rouletted ware.<sup>217</sup> Burial urns containing beads and ashes were found outside structures, and outside the settlement wall. A stone slab inscribed with several lines in Pyu language and Brahmi script was recovered. Besides finger-marked bricks, curved and ornamental bricks bear unusual motifs such as a figure on horseback and a Bhadrapiṭha motif.<sup>218</sup>

## WADI

Wadi is located in Myingyan District, Mandalay Division. U Yi Sein referred to Wadi as an outpost between the fourth and ninth centuries,<sup>219</sup> but the name does not appear in Chinese accounts or Burmese chronicles. One inscription in Wadi contains the name Wadi, but it was carved during the colonial period.<sup>220</sup>

Aung Thaw and his team began to explore Wadi in 1964, and reported circular brick walls and mounds with finger-marked bricks as well as terracotta, black and white line-drawn and zoomorphic stone beads. The next year, Than Swe and Aung Kyaing reported black and white line-drawn beads from within the settlement.<sup>221</sup> In 2008 and 2009 a Myanmar team conducted two excavations in Wadi. The first exposed a northern gateway, an area west of this gateway, a building east of the western wall, and another structure next to it. The second excavation was carried out at a southern gateway, and an area near the moat east of what was called the “palace” mound. Both excavations recovered burial urns and earthen oil lamps.<sup>222</sup>

Myo Nyunt Aung argues on the basis of similarities between artifacts found in the Samon valley sites and “Pyu” artifacts excavated in Wadi, that Wadi can provide important information on the transition from the Preclassic to the period usually characterized as “Pyu”. There are no carbon dates for Wadi, but Aung hypothesizes that Wadi predates Beikthano, Halin, Maingmaw, and Sri Ksetra. Whether Wadi had a central role in the transmission of cultural elements from Samon Iron Age culture to the Protoclassic sites of central Myanmar is debatable; earlier Preclassic artifacts were found in the vicinity of Halin, for example. Further systematic research in Wadi is necessary to shed light on the site’s role in the transition from Preclassic to Protoclassic, if indeed it represented an important contact and transfer zone.

## SRI KSETRA

Sri Ksetra, or *Tharehketara* in Myanmar language, is known also as Hmawza, Pyay, or Prome. It is located in the south central plain of Burma, east of the Ayeyarwadi River. Sri Ksetra is the largest of the five sites, with a wall enclosing approximately 30 square kilometers (Figure 4.2).<sup>223</sup> It was mentioned in the accounts of Buddhist pilgrims Xuanzhang and Yijing in the seventh century.<sup>224</sup> An early eighteenth-century chronicle, U Kala’s *Mahayazawingyi* (“Great Chronicle”), described Sri Ksetra as an ideal city possessing 32 gateways like the city of Indra and other gods.<sup>225</sup> Like Beikthano, Sri Ksetra has an off-centered citadel which could have been a palace. A large number of structural remains are found in and outside the wall, the majority in the southern and southeastern area of the site.

The first excavations at Sri Ksetra were conducted from 1906 to 1907 by Taw Sein Ko. Artifacts excavated include stone urns containing ashes of cremated bodies and bearing Pyu inscriptions in Brahmi script giving kings’ names and dates containing years, but not eras. The urns are said to date to the seventh and eighth centuries CE based on the script.<sup>226</sup>

Visnu and Buddha images have been recovered in Sri Ksetra. The site also possesses *gu* (“cave”-like) buildings, such as Hpaya Htaung; a square brick structure, East Zegu; and Laymyethna, a large *gu* with its own enclosure, outside the wall; and large bulbous-shaped stupas such as Hpaya Gyi and Baw-bawgyi, both of which have been characterized as Singhalese-style.<sup>227</sup> Other artifacts excavated include: inscribed gold Buddhist plates bound with gold wire found together with a silver Buddha image, a silver reliquary inscribed with a king’s name, numerous gold and silver artifacts, stone beads including jadeite elephants and a chalcedony tortoise, an image of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, and guardian figures in a site known as U Khin Ba mound.<sup>228</sup>

## DATING THE SITES

Myanmar scholars generally agree that Beikthano, Halin, Maingmaw, and Wadi<sup>229</sup> are earlier than Sri Ksetra; Sri Ksetra encompasses the largest area and is considered the most recent site. Sri Ksetra contains Bagan-period structures such as temples, suggesting that activities continued after the ninth century. This chronology relies on a chronicle tradition which presents a continuous sequence of cities from

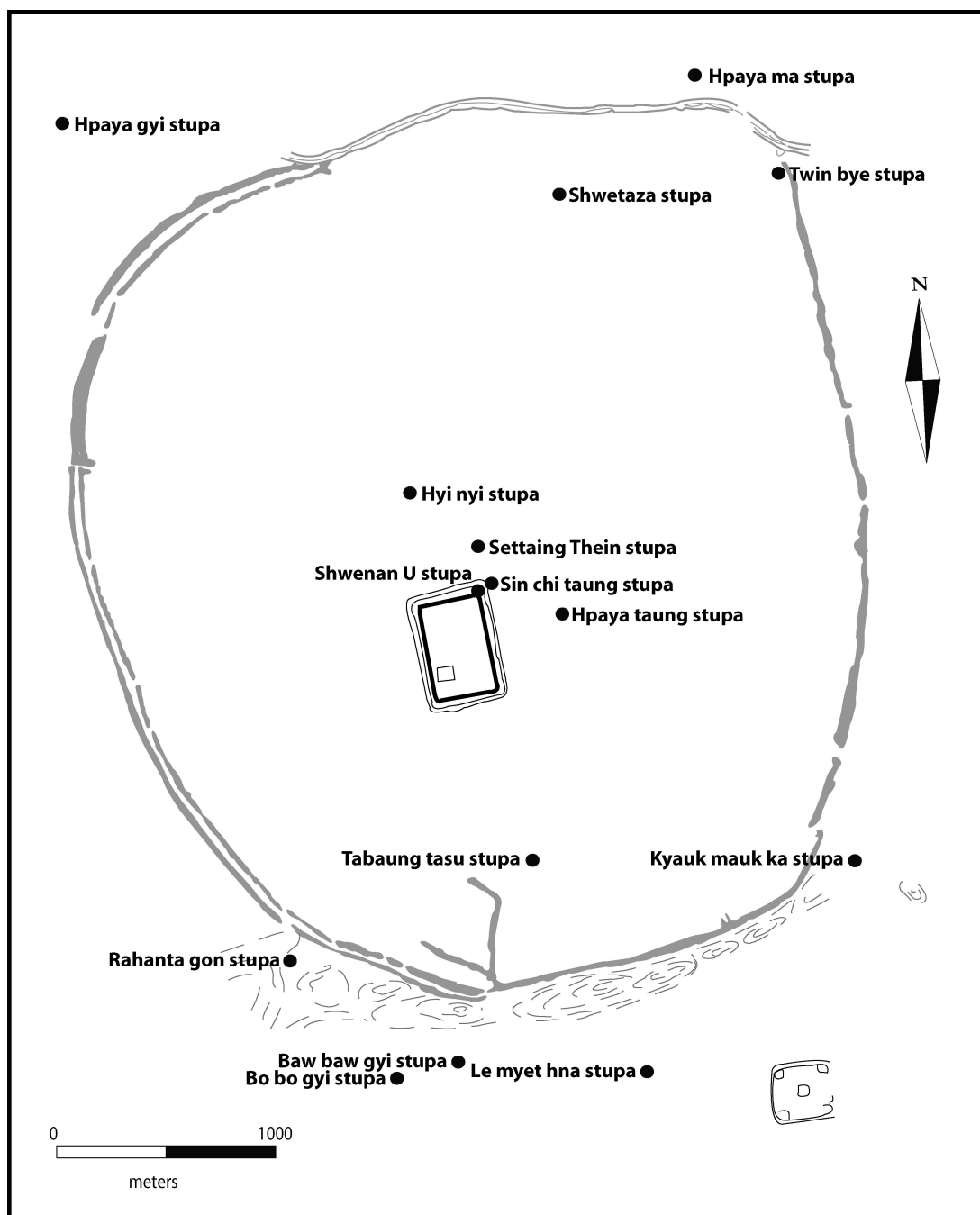


Figure 4.2 Sri Ksetra Map

the Pyu through the Bagan and later periods.<sup>230</sup> Only two of the “Pyu” sites are recorded in the Myanmar chronicle tradition: Beikthano and Sri Ksetra. Beikthano is dated to between the second century BCE and the fourth century CE by a few radiocarbon dates,<sup>231</sup> Halin to second to ninth centuries CE (limited radiocarbon dates), Maingmaw to the fourth and fifth centuries CE (stylistic criteria of structures and artifacts), and Sri Ksetra to approximately 500 to 700 CE (limited radiocarbon dates). There is no firm means of dating Wadi, where research has only recently begun.<sup>232</sup>

Most dates are based mainly on circumstantial stylistic evidence in pottery and palaeography, without dated inscriptions. Wadi’s identification as a “Pyu” site is also based on limited data. Gutman and Hudson conclude that Halin dates to between 60 and 870 based on recalculations of radiocarbon dates sent by Myint Aung, with previous dates published in the latter’s 1970 work.<sup>233</sup> Excavations in Beikthano in the 1960s yielded four radiocarbon dates from samples of wooden pillars found in two sites. The samples from one site provided early ranges from second century BCE to fourth century CE. The second set of two dates from another site give a range from the first century CE to the seventh century CE.<sup>234</sup>

In 2012, a very early dating of 2890 to 2470 BCE was reported for what the investigators argued was an earthenware firing site in Halin. Only three carbon samples were obtained providing three date ranges, a limited sampling size which cannot be regarded as conclusive evidence for a third millennium BCE date, which is much older than any other kiln in Seasia.<sup>235</sup>

## WALLS, MOATS, AND OTHER STRUCTURAL FEATURES

Aerial photographs are the main source of data on walled settlements which Myanmar scholars consider cities, or *myo*, in Myanmar language. Settlements with walls and in some cases moats are distributed throughout Myanmar. The sites differ greatly in terms of the shapes, number of walls, layout plans, and sizes of the walls. These differences probably reflect differences in chronology, but the dearth of studies on these settlements makes it difficult to draw any general conclusions.

The walls of the five sites covered in this chapter vary considerably. The walls of Beikthano and Halin are quadrangular with rounded or curved corners; the walls of Maingmaw, Sri Ksetra, and Wadi are elliptical. Differences in wall shapes may indicate that the two groups of sites belong to different periods, or they may reflect cultural preferences of the peoples who constructed them. The limited radiocarbon dates for Beikthano and Halin place both sites within a period from the second century BCE to ninth century CE. This may indicate that quadrangular sites are earlier than circular/elliptical sites; at least two dates from contexts of gateways or walls provide potential dates for the walls.

Limited radiocarbon dates from Sri Ksetra place the site in the period between 500 and 700 CE, after Beikthano and Halin. There are no radiocarbon dates from Maingmaw and Wadi; thus there is no evidence to support views that these sites predate Beikthano, Halin, or even Sri Ksetra. If the form of settlement walls can be used for site classification, Maingmaw and Wadi belong to the same class of sites as Sri Ksetra. Another attribute which places Beikthano and Halin in the same category is the number of gateways – 12.

Other determinants are structural features which constitute part of any site’s plan. Beikthano and Sri Ksetra contain a rectangular enclosure described as a citadel or palace area. The citadel at Sri Ksetra

measures 575 meters by 375 meters, while the Beikthano citadel measures 450 meters by 360 meters.<sup>236</sup> Myanmar researchers suggest that Halin, Maingmaw, and Wadi have citadels, but archaeological evidence does not conclusively support this point. Several walls were excavated in Halin in the 1960s near where a citadel would have been, but their form remains unclear.

The layouts of all five sites exhibit considerable variation. There is no clear pattern to support the view that all five sites belonged to the same archaeological culture. There is a noticeable difference in the rhomboidal form of Beikthano compared with the more regular and elongated but symmetrical rectangular settlement wall of Halin. Either these two sites were built at different times (supported by their different radiocarbon dates) or within the same period but by different groups of people.

Finger-marked bricks were excavated in all five sites, but this type of artifact was also found in Bagan, Tagaung, and other sites, including lower Myanmar. This type of brick has also been found in central and northeast Thailand, and in South Asia.<sup>237</sup> Some of these sites might have been contemporaries, but many are later sites with differently shaped walls. For instance, Bagan and Tagaung have only three walls, with the Ayeyarwadi River on the fourth side. Some Myanmar scholars have proposed that Tagaung and Bagan previously had a fourth wall which was eroded by the river as a result of geomorphological changes which caused the river to change course.<sup>238</sup> There is, however, little evidence to support this argument. Scholars have suggested that geomorphological changes explain why streams ran through the centers of Halin and Maingmaw; they argued that the current course of the streams is a recent development. However, it is possible that the people who built the walls decided to incorporate the streams into the settlements. Further research, including palaeobotany, could shed light on changes in the environment and topography, but at present this remains an untested hypothesis.

Study of the shapes of walls in Myanmar shows many variations which may correspond to different periods, though they may have been influenced by local environment and topography. The differences in wall shapes should not be correlated with ethnicity; the five examples in this chapter show that it is problematic to suggest that the sites were “Pyu”. Shapes of walls, however, can be an indicator of chronology. For walled settlements in Myanmar, there appears to be a chronological progression from circular and quadrangular to three-sided to irregular to irregular rectilinear and finally regular rectilinear. There are obvious slight variations within these categories.

Another feature which can be used for comparison is the number of city walls. The number of city walls here refers not to the number of sides a city wall has, but rather whether there are double or triple walls on each side of the settlement. Some sites have double or triple walls on one side, but others possess them on all sides. Beikthano has single walls on all four sides; little remains of the west wall. Except the north wall, which was built on a dike of yellow clay, the other three walls were constructed on the surface; the south wall was very likely used for flood control.<sup>239</sup> Unlike Beikthano, Halin appears to possess three wall enclosures on the west, east, and even north, but not on the south, where only a single wall runs. There were probably two external concentric walls on the south, but none is visible.

At Sri Ksetra, the land on the east is “lower and flatter”, rising some additional 12 meters at the east end of the triple walls on the southeast side of the site; the site slopes upward to the west, so that the west portion of the site is 80 to 90 meters higher than the east. These triple layers of wall on the southeast corner might have served an additional function of flood control.<sup>240</sup> Double walls extend from the south side, east of the southeast triple walls running south-north along the west side. There are single walls to the north and east.

Both Maingmaw and Wadi have single circular/elliptical walls. These remarkable differences among the five sites again indicate that these characteristics reflect local adaptation to the environment, geography, topography, and perhaps even temporal changes in which extensions, repairs, and reinforcements were added to the settlement walls.

## SITE SIZES

Scholars often assume that these five walled sites were “cities” which performed certain functions, and that they had large, dense populations, but historical and archaeological evidence for this remains to be assembled. Scholars who have studied Myanmar sites have seldom provided definitions of what is meant by “cities”, “urbanization”, or “urbanism”. The assumption that walls, moats, and river embankments are defining characteristics of a Myanmar *myo* or “city” or “town” remains largely unanalyzed. It has been suggested that construction of gates and walls in early Myanmar was a local adaptation of cultural features resulting from contact with China and India,<sup>241</sup> when people in Myanmar were “well used to incorporating aspects of neighbouring cultures”.<sup>242</sup> The nineteenth-century tendency to ascribe Seasian developments to external influence has not been completely eliminated.

The five sites differ greatly in area; Sri Ksetra covers 1,452 hectares, but the northeast quadrant of the site contains few remains, while important remains lie outside the wall. The second largest is Beikthano, measuring 859 hectares, followed by Halin at 629 hectares and Maingmaw at 625 hectares. Wadi is the smallest, with an area measuring 202 hectares. In terms of settlement sizes, the five sites can be grouped into three categories: large sites with Sri Ksetra and Beikthano, medium-sized settlements comprising Halin and Maingmaw, and small settlements, with Wadi as an example. These groupings of sites may be correlated to their geographical locations. More surveys of site sizes are needed to create a statistically relevant sample.

Calculating the size of a settlement by measuring the area enclosed by the wall is simple but not always representative of relative position in a hierarchy of settlements. We cannot assume that the entire enclosed area of the settlement was utilized at any one time. Recent studies have considered the possibility that these sites were centers of low-density occupation such as has recently been proposed for Angkor.<sup>243</sup> The model of the orthogenetic city, an agrarian-based administrative center with monumental architecture, sparse populations, low level of market-based economic activity, with manufacturing activity on the periphery,<sup>244</sup> has also been proposed for Myanmar urban sites.<sup>245</sup> Further archaeological research may demonstrate the utility of this model.

## LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

Beikthano and Sri Ksetra are located in lower central Myanmar; Halin and Maingmaw are in the upper and northern regions of Myanmar; Wadi lies in the zone between these two groups. Based on available radiocarbon dates, Beikthano and Halin were near-contemporary core settlements in the south and north, respectively, between 200 and 500 CE, just as Maingmaw and Sri Ksetra might have been near



contemporaries during the second half of the first millennium CE. Geography and topography probably influenced the shapes of the settlement walls of all five sites. The orientation of Halin, for instance, was probably adapted to the slope of the land.

Proximity to water is also an important consideration. All five Protoclassic sites are located near water bodies: Beikthano is located at the confluence of several streams which pour into the Ayeyarwadi River, and the other four sites are near creeks. Beikthano's proximity to the rice-producing region of Minbu to the west and the Kyaukse rice bowl to the northeast is highly unlikely to be a coincidence. Halin is located in the midst of salt fields, an important commodity in prehistoric through historic periods. The other three sites, Maingmaw, Sri Ksetra, and Wadi, are located in a rich mineralogical belt where gold, copper, and iron fostered the development of industry associated with the processing of these metals. Great numbers of iron furnaces have been noted in the area around Sri Ksetra.<sup>246</sup> Iron objects were recovered from Wadi, but systematic research has only recently begun at this site. Research in Maingmaw is also in its early stage and should provide further information on the site's proximity to natural resources. Whether the five sites are located on trade routes can be determined through the analysis of artifacts excavated at these sites, especially artifacts not manufactured locally.

## ARTIFACTS

The range of artifacts excavated from the five sites can provide information on whether these sites formed part of any exchange network, and whether they constituted part of the same archaeological culture. "Pyu" types of artifacts comprise "Pyu" language inscriptions or inscribed objects, burial urns, beads, and coins.<sup>247</sup> Burial urns, stone and earthenware, have been found in the interiors and exteriors of buildings, stupas, inside and outside of gates and walls. The most common burial urns found in these Protoclassic sites are earthenware inside and outside city gates and structures. Placement of urns outside city walls is common in all these sites, usually in elevated locations. Two urns were excavated at the outside curve of the Lulinkyaw gate in Sri Ksetra during 1997 and 1998.<sup>248</sup>

Urn with iron artifacts were buried in elevated grounds at these sites. Numerous urn graves were found in low mounds at Beikthano.<sup>249</sup> At a grave site south of Sri Ksetra, more than 1,000 earthenware urns were found, each measuring 15 to 22.5 centimeters in height, arranged in rows and layers on brick terraces.<sup>250</sup> Similar earthenware urns were found in two layers in a stupa structure at Halin.<sup>251</sup> Urn contents include ashes and bone fragments, silver coins, and beads of stone and glass.

Earthenware pottery is common at most Myanmar archaeological sites. Myanmar researchers refer to these pots found at these five Protoclassic sites and used for burial urns as "Pyu" pots, but there are few identifying characteristics, such as decoration or shapes, which distinguish them from earthenware pottery excavated from other supposedly non-Pyu sites. Pottery from Halin comprises both plain and decorated examples; the latter bear motifs of human figures, *srivatsa*, and *bhadrapitha*, as well as paddle-impressed hatching and punch-marks. Similar designs can also be found in later sites such as Bagan and even the fifteenth- to sixteenth-century kiln area of Twante. It would appear that it is the function of these pots as urns rather than their forms which has led scholars to distinguish them from other pots as "Pyu". However, primary and secondary jar burials are not restricted to specific

cultural and/or ethnolinguistic groups in Seasia. The earthenware pottery was likely produced at each site; mounds or areas named Otein Taung (“potters’ mound”) are found outside the walls of several sites such as Beikthano.

Only stone urns with inscribed “Pyu” writing can be regarded as examples of artifacts associated with the “Pyu” ethnolinguistic group. Five were found in Sri Ksetra at a site called Beikthano Queen’s cemetery. These urns are inscribed with royal names and dates, and are preliminarily dated to the fourth to eighth centuries CE. The script used is interlinear Brahmi. The dates, names, and contents have been explicated; San Win and Tun Aung Chain suggested that they belonged to members of a Vikrama dynasty which ruled before or during the seventh century.<sup>252</sup> The procedure via which the urns’ inscriptions were deciphered reflects continuing issues faced in the translation of “Pyu” language.

Pyu artifacts also include a stele found in Sri Ksetra, between the “palace” and the iron production site.<sup>253</sup> The stele, which depicts a warrior-king figure, may represent a continuation of earlier tradition of worshipping ancestors and spirits via the medium of stone megaliths: “the practice of venerating large stones was absorbed into Pyu Buddhist art”.<sup>254</sup> This stele has been dated to the first century by some scholars<sup>255</sup> and the first half of the fifth century CE by another, based on stylistic similarities with examples from Amaravati and other Buddhist sites.<sup>256</sup> Six massive stones have been found at Kyaukka Thein Kyaung and another one near the stupa called Bebe Zedi at Sri Ksetra which bear images of Buddha and a *bodhisattva*, and one depicting a *dvarapala* (door guardian) and a bird-like vehicle.<sup>257</sup> Large slabs were also found in Halin. Standing stones which include stelae are not limited to these five walled sites associated with so-called “Pyu” culture, so they may not be diagnostic of this archaeological grouping.

The last type of artifact associated with “Pyu” culture consists of silver and silver alloy coins which usually bear motifs such as the rising sun, *srivatsa*, *bhadrapiṭha*, and conch. Such coins have been found at all five sites; the most common motifs recorded are the pairing of *srivatsa* and conch. San Shwe has suggested that the rising sun motif is older, based on his observation that this type of coin is rarer, and because the rising sun coins were recovered from what the Myanmar believe to be older “Pyu” sites. This hypothesis would be viable, should examples of these coins be found in association with dateable materials such as carbon. The identification of these coins with “Pyu” culture remains a problem as the coins are not exclusively found in “Pyu” sites. Like finger-marked bricks, they were distributed over large areas, including lower Myanmar, southern Vietnam, central Thailand, and even Bengal (Figure 4.3).<sup>258</sup> The motifs are not specific to any ethnic or cultural group. Gutman argued that the designs were adapted from Andhran pieces.<sup>259</sup> Some variations, such as the combination of motifs, may reflect local production. It has been questioned whether these coin-like objects functioned as currency;<sup>260</sup> they were distributed over a wide area but have not been found in large quantities. There are other explanations for this phenomenon, however, such as the likelihood that they were melted down in later periods.

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CULTURE?

The five sites—Beikthano, Halin, Maingmaw, Sri Ksetra, and Wadi—possess similar characteristics, such as a wall, religious structures, water tanks, jar burials, “Pyu” language inscriptions, silver coins,



**Figure 4.3** Silver coin with srivatsa motif, found at Oc-èo. Similar coins are found in sites across mainland Southeast Asia, including Sri Ksetra.

beads, and certain metal objects. However, does possessing all these various features in some form constitute sufficient evidence to support an argument that all five sites, and any other sites which have these elements, belong to the same archaeological culture? If differences are noted in the shapes and forms of the walls, positioning of structures, types of artifacts found in each site, and varied quantities and composition of artifacts, do these indicate that these sites should be further divided into archaeological subcultures? The construction of walls continued over a long span of time from Preclassic through Protoclassic and into the Classic period, suggesting that this activity was not restricted to a

single archaeological culture. Circular-elliptical walled settlements, and even quadrangular walled sites also featured in other Seasian countries. Where to draw the line? The definition of an archaeological culture is arbitrary: it can be either monothetic with a set of fixed criteria, or polythetic with a degree of flexibility (in order to belong to the category, an entity must have a predetermined number of features). Some features should be considered potentially more significant than others. In the case of the five sites, the fact that all of them possess at least seven criteria would suggest that they belong to the same archaeological culture; where there are observable differences, these can be explained by local adaptation and choice.

## EARLY URBAN SITES?

Studies which discuss these five sites always refer to them as “cities” or urban centers but do not provide any definition of a city or urban center. What makes these sites “urban”? This lack of definition prevents more nuanced discussion of the process of urbanization. Urbanization or urbanism (either defined as an “urban way of living” or presence of urban features) seems to have appeared abruptly with the emergence of the earliest walled settlement, Beikthano, perhaps as early as the second century BCE. Little attempt has been made to explain how the process may have come about or why Beikthano, Halin, and the other walled sites are “cities” or urban centers other than the fact that they have walls. Urbanization should be viewed as a process which does not occur overnight, and cannot be imported like an artifact; the evolution of the process can be measured via tracing the addition of features which reflect increased complexity in the usage of space over time. It can also be supported by evidence of increasing complexity in the activities undertaken by inhabitants of a settlement. Another indicator can be population density or increase in population at a site over time. Identification of habitation sites would be extremely useful, but this appears to be difficult to achieve. At sites where more research has been undertaken, such as Angkor, the results have failed to substantiate the hypothesis that Angkor was a densely populated center. Scholars have recently proposed that Angkor was a low-density “city” with an extended “urban” sprawl. This is a matter of definition. This idea has also been incorporated into recent interpretation of the early walled sites in Myanmar.<sup>261</sup> The huge amount of archaeological activity needed to calculate the extent, range, and intensity of human activity within entire sites remains to be done.

Other models such as orthogenetic and heterogenetic cities<sup>262</sup> and polythetic definitions have been proposed as alternative means to determine what constitutes an urban center in Protoclassic Myanmar. These models allow researchers to move away from population density as a key determinant of an urban center. Another means of improving the conceptualization of early Southeast Asian urbanization is to explore indigenous systems of classifying sites. Southeast Asian languages provide rich repositories of concepts for describing categories of sites. Myanmar language provides a system for classifying different types of sites in a ranked hierarchy according to population and spatial terms. Myanmar language contains words for five types of sites: *pyi*, *pura*, *myo*, *gon auk*, and *ywa*. *Pyay* refers to a polity, kingdom, or a country, but when used with *nay* and *daw* to form *Naypyidaw*, it refers to the royal capital, administrative capital, or where the palace of the king is located, and is assumed to be an urban center. *Pura*

is derived from a Pali/Sanskrit word and refers to a site which possesses religious structures or images of Buddha, or is associated with kingship. In modern-day usage, the term is used interchangeably to refer to Buddha, Buddha images, stupas, temples, and even a title of respect used by laity to address monks. In historical context, *pura* was used in a few examples, namely in the case of old Bagan during its stint as the site of the fourth capital-polity, Arimaddanapura. *Myo* is probably the term most closely associated with the term “city” or “town”. It refers to a site which possesses a wall, a moat, and a market place. *Myo* is usually paired with another classifier which provides a more nuanced definition of the site it refers to, such as *myo taw* to refer to a “royal city” of a particular kingdom or dynasty; it does not necessarily refer to a primate city: it can be a secondary city. *Myo gyi* gives the site the impression that it is large compared with another.

*Gon auk* is rarely used in Myanmar. It came into common use during the nineteenth century to refer to “forts”. The last term, *ywa*, is the most common and refers to the smallest spatial entity: village. This summary of Myanmar concepts of sites demonstrates that in the Myanmar classification system, the significance of sites which is reflected to its position in the hierarchy is not based explicitly on population size and even physical size in terms of area, but its importance in terms of its role as a royal residential site, religious site, or administrative site.

The five sites covered in this chapter possess features which qualify them to be urban sites in the sense that the activities which appear to have been carried out in these sites reflect complexity beyond that of villages and perhaps even small towns. There is no means of determining the density of their populations at any specific point in time, but population density is only one measurement criterion. The process of urbanization still remains under-researched, but urbanism as a way of living characterized by a range of activities within a settlement is indicated in all five sites. These sites exhibit architectural mastery in the construction of walls and gateways; rather sophisticated water management systems (flood management and water storage and drainage); different types of buildings indicative of change over time and therefore stability; existence of a religious communication system through art, architecture, and sculpture; a writing system; industrial activities such as metal working or iron smelting and pottery making; some form of political system (names of kings and dynasties); and coinage possibly associated with a market system. These indicators of complex behavior at these sites suggest that they exhibit urban features.

## THE PROTOCLASSIC PERIOD IN THE STRAITS OF MELAKA (PENINSULAR MALAYSIA AND SUMATRA)

### The effect of wind on history

The Roman sailor Hippalus (who may be mythical) was said to have discovered the secret of the monsoons. Probably he (or the people whom he represents) learned about them from Se Asians who had learned how to use them to reach the east coast of Africa. The Arabs coined the terms “above the wind” to refer to ports in the Indian Ocean, and “below the wind” for ports in the Straits of Melaka and the Java



Sea. The Chinese divided maritime Asia into two parts: the eastern and western oceans. The boundary between them was the southern entrance to the Straits of Melaka. It was possible but difficult and possibly dangerous to attempt to sail from the lands above the wind (the Indian Ocean) to the lands below the wind (the South China Sea, the Java Sea) in one monsoon. The Straits of Melaka was a natural meeting place for merchants from the two seas. Rather than take up to three years to travel from one sea to the other and back home again, traders could meet in the Straits of Melaka, obtain merchandise from the other sea, and return home in less than a year (Figure 4.4).

Chinese traders were not allowed to leave China until the twelfth century CE. Chinese ships were not capable of making long ocean voyages until that time. Chinese envoys and Buddhist monks going abroad sailed on foreign ships. The Chinese monk Faxian sailed from Java to Guangzhou in 414 CE on a merchant ship carrying more than 200 people. He saw no other Chinese among the merchants on his ship. He is the first person to report that people were travelling between India and China via Sumatra or Java instead of using portage routes across the Siamo-Malay Peninsula.

During the Wu and Qin dynasties, 226 to 405 CE, China received many missions from Seasia, the Eastern Roman Empire, and Sri Lanka. Besides He-lo-dan in Java, a place called *Poli* sent three missions between 473 and 524, and two others in 616 and 630, which mainly brought sea products (tortoise shell, prized for making combs and other jewellery in China, purple cowries, and coral). *Poli* may have

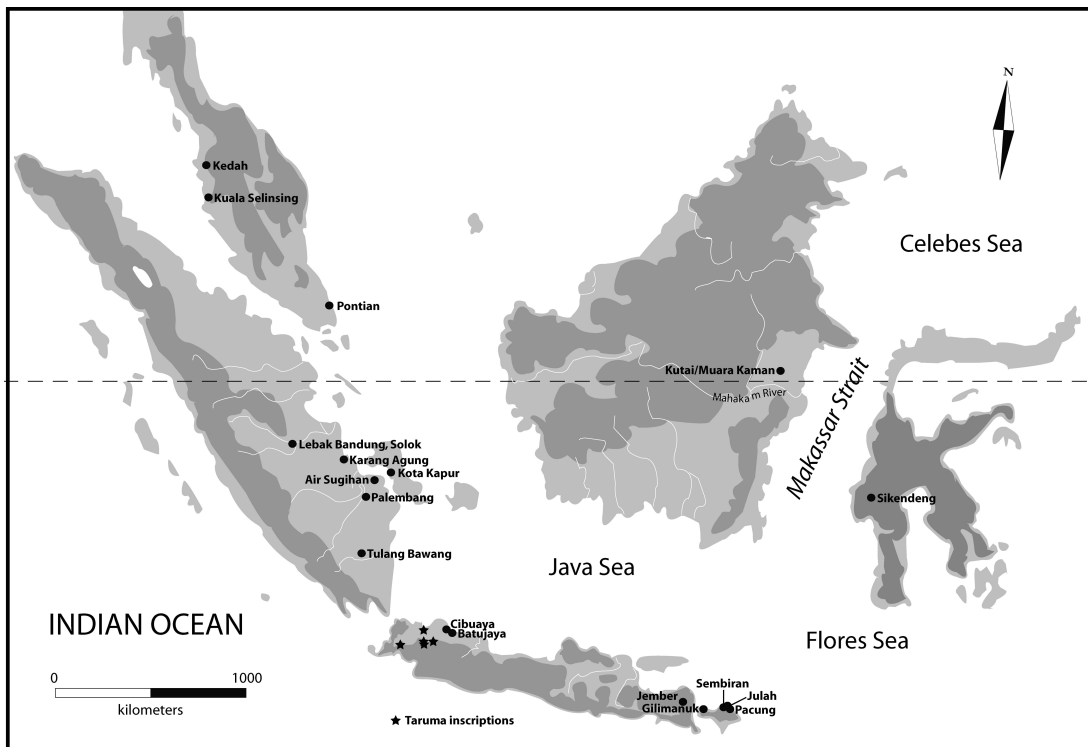


Figure 4.4 Proclassic Malaysia and Indonesia



been Bali; an important Balinese port of this period, Sembiran, has been studied by archaeologists (see subsequent discussion).

Two places in southeast Sumatra also sent missions to China in the Protoclassic. One, *Pohuang*, sent seven missions, a large number, during the period 445 to 464. Historians suspect that *Pohuang* is Tulangbawang in Lampung Province, where many beads of this period have been found. One Chinese source even mentions *Dolang Pohuang*.<sup>263</sup> One embassy in 434 was sent by a king whose name or title, transcribed in Chinese as *Shih-li-pi-chuo-yeh*, may have been Srivijaya. In the seventh century a major kingdom appears which used the same name but was transcribed using different Chinese characters.

*Gantoli* also sent a mission in 441 and five missions between 455 and 564 CE. This is fewer than *Pohuang*, but O.W. Wolters, principal historian of Sumatra during the Protoclassic period, considered *Gantoli* (possibly Kandari in Indonesian) the most important Sumatran kingdom trading with China during this period. A fascinating story from the *History of the Liang* says that the king of *Gantoli* had a dream in which a Buddhist monk came to him and told him that if he sent ambassadors to China to pay tribute, “your land will become rich and happy, and merchants and travellers will multiply a hundred-fold”.<sup>264</sup> The connection between tribute and trade in the minds of the Sumatrans was well understood by the Chinese; Ma Duanlin in 1316 wrote that envoys from *Gantoli* “sought the advantage of trade and the imperial presents, but they did not come because they really had a sentiment of their duty”.<sup>265</sup>

The *Ming Shi* (“History of the Ming Dynasty”) remembered that *Gantoli* had sent envoys to the Song dynasty (one of the southern dynasties of 454–464, not the later dynasty of the same name),<sup>266</sup> and that *Sanfoqi*, the main Malay kingdom of the twelfth through thirteenth centuries, was “formerly called *Gantoli*”. Archaeological discoveries which may come from the site of *Gantoli* have recently been discovered in the Musi River Delta.

## PROTOCLASSIC SITES: SENTANG, AIR SUGIHAN, AND KARANGAGUNG TENGAH, SOUTH SUMATRA<sup>267</sup>

Three recently discovered Protoclassic sites in southeast Sumatra hold great potential to explain the development of the seventh-century kingdoms of Malayu and Srivijaya. Urn burials dated to the period between 4,000 and 5,000 years ago have been found at Sentang, in South Sumatra Province, and Leb-akbandung, Jambi Province. Sentang was severely looted in the 1980s; artifacts reportedly found there include an ewer which has been provisionally assigned to Han dynasty China (206 BCE–220 CE).

Karangagung Tengah, between the Batanghari and Musi Rivers, came to the notice of archaeologists only after large quantities of artifacts had been dug up by looters. Excavations beginning in 2001 recovered beads of carnelian (similar to those found in Ban Don Ta Pet), rock crystal, and a shiny black stone which may be onyx. Glass beads of several styles were found. Ceramics include Romano-Indian rouletted ware and a large quantity of locally made earthenware. Radiocarbon dates on house posts range between the third and the sixth centuries. A large rudder from a ship has also been found.

Surveys by the Archaeological Institute of Palembang between 2002 and 2008 in the Air Sugihan area discovered more than 15 sites about 60 kilometers east of Palembang and 15 kilometers from the

current coastline, close to Kota Kapur, Bangka. Discoveries include large quantities of beads and Chinese ceramics attributed to the Sui Dynasty (581–618) and Song (960–1279) and remains of wooden house posts.

### Kota Kapur, Bangka Island<sup>268</sup>

The large island of Bangka lies directly opposite the mouths of the Musi River, gateway to Sumatra's most important early kingdom, Srivijaya. Bangka was important for three reasons: its large supply of tin, the pepper grown there (at least in recent times), and its seafaring population. There is also evidence that iron from the nearby island of Belitung was worked on Bangka. One important Srivijayan inscription was found at the site of Kota Kapur (see Fig. 4.4 and "Inscriptions of Srivijaya", Chapter 5). Other archaeological remains, including a Visnu image and a fragment of a possible statue of Durga, a Saivite deity, were also found near an earthen rampart 4 meters high and 2.5 kilometers long. The island may have been known to the compilers of the *Mahaniddesa* in the third century.<sup>269</sup>

Excavations at Kota Kapur by a Franco-Indonesian team in 1994, 1996, and 2007 yielded Proto-classic and Classic artifacts. Remains of four more statues of Visnu were found, of Protoclassic style, and numerous fragments of more Visnu statues with stone foundations of a structure 5.6 meters square with a staircase on the north side, as well as a fragmentary Durga. A Siva lingga was found in a second temple, 2.8 meters square, 40 meters northwest of the first. Protoclassic Visnu sanctuaries elsewhere in Seasia usually have a small lingga, plus statues of Durga and Surya. Beneath the stone foundations, remains of iron working were discovered. Radiocarbon dates gave imprecise results but indicate that the temple must have been erected after 532 CE, probably in the period 550 to 600. A date for the construction of the rampart gave a similar age (460–870 CE).

### Kedah, northwest Malaysia

The oldest known Buddhist texts composed in Southeast Asia are found in the modern state of Kedah, northwest peninsular Malaysia. Kedah's importance in early communication between Southeast Asia and India is directly related to its location. If one sails due west from the mountain known as Kedah Peak, one just misses the north tip of Sumatra and eventually reaches Sri Lanka.

Several stones inscribed with Sanskrit texts in a script used during the late fourth and fifth centuries have been discovered in the vicinity of the Merbok estuary in south Kedah. Three of them bear an identical ritual statement about the Buddhist law of cause and effect, or *karma*, which conforms to Buddhist philosophy, but has not been found in India or Sri Lanka. One of these stones, discovered by amateur antiquarian Col. James Low in the ruins of an ancient structure on the south side of the Muda River in 1848, bears an additional section which states "of the great sea-captain Buddhagupta, a resident (?) of *Raktamrrtika* [Red Earth Land] . . . by all means, in all, in all respects . . . all . . . be [they] successful in their voyage!"<sup>270</sup> The same text about karma and the stupa image are also carved on another stone found

in 1979 at the nearby site of Sungai Emas. This inscription is made of a local stone, is not as expertly carved as the Buddhagupta inscription, and lacks Buddhagupta's prayer.

Col. Low found another fifth-century inscription at Bukit Meriam, while excavating the ruins of a brick structure which he described as being 10 feet (3 meters) square. It bears the text of the Theory of Dependent Origin, plus the Buddhist Credo, or *ye dharmā* formula: "The Buddha has told the causes of all things which spring from a cause, and also how things cease to be – this is what the great monk proclaims." The *ye dharmā*, the karma formula, and images of stupas were also carved several times on a boulder on a tributary of the Kapuas River, west Borneo; it was carved not once but several times, along with the karma formula, and images of stupas similar to those found in Kedah. A stone fragment bearing the same karma formula has been found in Brunei. The *ye dharmā* credo comes from the Buddhist text *Saddharmmapundarika*, popularly known as the *Lotus Sutra*. The karma formula is, however, unusual. It may have formed a part of a local form of Buddhism popular in western Indonesia during the fifth through seventh centuries.

Chinese envoys visited a kingdom called *Chi tu*, literally "Red Earth", from 607 to 609. This kingdom was located on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula south of Langkasuka, was Buddhist, and according to the Chinese, formed part of Funan.<sup>271</sup> Several historians inferred that this Red Earth Land was the same one as found in the Kedah inscription.<sup>272</sup> There is also a Red Earth Land in Bengal.<sup>273</sup>

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN KEDAH: SUNGAI MAS (GOLDEN RIVER) AND SUNGAI BATU (STONE RIVER)

Numerous Protoclassic and Classic archaeological sites have been found in south Kedah. Excavations at Sungai Batu began in 2009 and have yielded evidence of extensive iron working and brick structures provisionally interpreted as landing stages for boats which may date from the early centuries CE. Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) dating on a brick jetty yielded an age of  $1740 \pm 25$  BP. At another site a strange round brick structure built on top of a square, apparently with some symbolic purpose, yielded an OSL date of  $1900 \pm 100$  BP. There is much evidence of iron smelting at the site; location SBA, dated to the first to fifth centuries, has revealed remains of furnaces, iron ore, stone tools, and tuyères (clay pipes to conduct air from bellows into the furnaces).<sup>274</sup>

At Sungai Mas ("Golden River"), which yielded one of the three inscriptions bearing the local statement about karma, a team from the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and the Malaysian National Museum in 1980 discovered brick foundations, six of which were excavated. Finds included several Buddhist artifacts of the fifth or sixth century CE: an inscription about karma found in 1979 that has been previously mentioned; the head of a Buddha image of approximately the same date, found by chance by villagers; and a baked clay image of a woman carrying a child which has been tentatively identified as Hariti, a Buddhist deity.

One of the sites in the village, Site 53, covers at least 20 hectares. A profile at Site 53A displayed three cultural layers. Artifacts included glass beads and glass fragments, including eight probable reject

beads. Possibly, glass beads were made here from imported glass. A large quantity of carnelian beads was also recovered.<sup>275</sup>

### Funan connections and early ships

Pottery from Funan has been discovered at two sites in the Malay Peninsula. At Pontian, they were associated with the remains of a ship. One unresolved question is whether the Pontian boat was made in Funan or the Malay Peninsula. The ship was built from a kind of timber from trees of the genera *Hopea* and *Shorea*, which are widespread in Southeast Asia. Based on comparison with traditional boat types, Gibson-Hill argued that the Pontian vessel was probably built near the Mekong Delta or on the shores of the Gulf of Siam.<sup>276</sup> Radiocarbon analysis showed that the wood for the ship was felled between 260 and 430, making the Pontian vessel the oldest dated boat yet found in Southeast Asia.<sup>277</sup> The *Liang Shu* says that Funan's ships carried up to 100 paddlers.<sup>278</sup> The *Nan Zhou Yi Wu Zhi*, apparently recording information from the end of the third century, describes other ships: "The men from foreign lands called their boats *bo*. The large ones are over 200 feet long, and are twenty to thirty feet high [above the water-level], . . . they can hold 600 to 700 men, and a cargo of over 10,000 *ho* (a Chinese corn measure about ten pecks).<sup>279</sup> The men from beyond our frontiers use four sails for their ships. . . ."<sup>280</sup>

The Pontian boat, about 12 meters long, is much smaller than the *bo* category. It may have been used for trips within Southeast Asia rather than longer voyages. Another boat of the same approximate age has been found at Kolam Pinisi, Palembang, South Sumatra, dated 434 to 631.

Ceramics found at Kuala Selinsing, on the west coast of the state of Perak, include several sherds very similar to a particular type known from Oc-èo. Excavations at Kuala Selinsing also yielded several items imported from India such as a carnelian seal with a Sanskrit inscription dated palaeographically to the fourth or fifth century.<sup>281</sup>

### The rise of Sumatra and the decline of Oc-èo

Many authorities have suggested that Oc-èo culture disappeared because its ports were by-passed by sailing routes through the Straits of Melaka which replaced or at least took away much business from the portages across the Malay Peninsula. At the same time as several ports emerged or became more prosperous in the Straits in the Early Classic period, the Protoclassic ports in the upper Siamo-Malay Peninsula and the Mekong Delta vanished. Ian Glover believes that the social context of the first exchanges of raw materials, such as copper and tin, and exotic products such as gemstones, between widely dispersed groups in Southeast Asia conformed to Renfrew's boundary reciprocal or down-the-line relationships. Such border-area exchange, involving contacts at the margins of two contiguous societies, does not normally change the internal composition or power relations of either group.

The trade between the Graeco-Romans and India, on the other hand, can be characterized by Renfrew's middleman and port of trade models.<sup>283</sup> Possibly Sumatrans devised a new system which involved direct access to the centers of their trading partners, obviating the down-the-line model. Numerous other variables can also be hypothesized, however.

## PROTOCLASSIC JAVA

### The Buni Complex

The Buni Complex is a group of sites named after a village on the eastern fringe of Jakarta where archaeological remains were found and mostly looted in the 1960s.<sup>284</sup> Three clusters of related sites are found in the same coastal plain. The complex is mainly known from graves. Artifacts include stone bracelets and rectangular adzes, some of semi-precious stone such as jasper and chalcedony; ceremonial bronze axes and bracelets; locally produced earthenware pottery (Figure 4.5); and some gold items. No radiocarbon dates have been obtained, but the presence of Romano-Indian rouletted ware ceramics indicates that the complex dates to the terminal Preclassic and early Protoclassic, that is, between 1800 and 2200 years ago.<sup>285</sup> Romano-Indian rouletted ware was not well known to Southeast Asian archaeologists in the 1970s but has now been identified at sites in both mainland and western insular Southeast Asia.

The Buni Complex is found in the same area as the earliest Protoclassic artifacts in Java. This suggests that there was continuity between the two phases, and that Indian cultural elements were appropriated by a society which already had been in contact with India and other parts of Asia for centuries.

## JAVA IN EARLY INSCRIPTIONS AND TEXTS

The name *Yavadvipa* ("Barley Island"; the equivalent term *Yavabhumi*, "Land of Java", occurs in early Javanese inscriptions) appears in the *Ramayana* (in a passage which cannot be later than 100 CE) as one of the four corners of the world to which rescuers go to look for Sita. A similar toponym, *Iabadiou*, is found in Klaudios Ptolemaios' *Geographike Hyphegesis* (circa 150 CE). His coordinates place Java at the southeastern corner of the known world. Ptolemaeus quoted a reference from his predecessor Marinus of Tyre to another city named Zabai, which lay 20 days' journey south of the *Aurea Chersonesos* (Siam-Malay/Golden Peninsula). Zabai people sailed to Kattigara, in the vicinity of Funan.<sup>286</sup> Zabai resembles a name found in later Arabic sources which probably refers to South Sumatra as well as Java.<sup>287</sup> In the early sixteenth century, Westerners thought there were two Javas, Java Maior and Java Minor ("Greater" and "Lesser" Java). Ptolemaios had heard of an *emporion*, a trading port belonging to a recognized class of such establishments all around the Indian Ocean, at the western end of Iabadiou.



**Figure 4.5** Buni earthenware

Its name was Argyre. Chinese sources contain several names which seem like efforts to transcribe “Java”. One is *Yediao*, whose King Diao Bien in 132 CE sent a mission to the Han court.

Faxian, a Chinese monk, visited the port of *Yeh ti* (which sounds like Javadvipa) on his way home in 414. He bemoaned the fact that there were no Buddhists “to speak of” there (perhaps there were a few, whereas Brahmanism was flourishing);<sup>288</sup> archaeological research has uncovered impressive evidence of a sizeable Buddhist complex in northwest Java which must have come into existence around this time. It is possible that more than one kingdom existed in northwest Java in 414 CE, and that Faxian’s ship stopped in a more Brahmanical port. There is also evidence of a thriving cult of Visnu in about the same time and place.

Ten years later in 424 a famous Buddhist monk from what is now Kashmir stopped at *Shepo*, where he is said to have preached on his way to China. He also stopped at Champa, where he is said to have made converts. Faxian’s ship probably would have stopped at Champa but was caught in a storm and blown directly to China. Possibly he and other Buddhist pilgrims were responsible for the establishment of Buddhist monuments discovered at Batujaya. Some Chinese sources treat *Shepo* as a kingdom, for instance, when recording embassies from there in 433 and 435. *Pota* or *Shepo Pota* sent missions in



435, 449, and 451.<sup>289</sup> These may all have been the same kingdom, but another fifth-century Chinese source calls Shepo an island. Perhaps one kingdom called itself “Java” in the early first millennium CE. Chinese sources record that at least two kingdoms were pitted against each other for control of the area in the fifth century.

Early Javanese inscriptions seem to refer to all Indonesian peoples as *Jawa*. Early Khmer and Cham inscriptions, written in scripts derived from Brahmi, call the peoples of the islands *Jvā*. Pali texts used *Jāvaka*. Thus *Jawa*-like names had very wide application in the earliest sources.

After the seventh century, *Shepo* probably referred more specifically to central Java, from which embassies came in 860 and 873. The ambassadors told the Chinese that they built wooden fortifications; that they used only palm leaves, not tiles, for roofing; and that their furniture consisted of ivory couches and plaited bamboo mats. The kingdom’s products included tortoise shell (an imperial monopoly avidly sought after in China) and rhinoceros horn. The people were literate and had knowledge of astronomy. The court was organized in a mandala pattern, with 28 vassals and 32 ministers. Chinese sources continued to use *Shepo* after the transfer of the court from central to east Java between 919 and 929 CE. *Lingwai Daida* in 1178 described *Shepo* as the second wealthiest country in the world after the Arab country. *Dao-yi-za-zhi*, 1270, and *Da-de-nan-hai-zhi*, 1304, mentioned *She po guo*, “Java country”, which was geographical and/or ethnolinguistic in import rather than political. In 1349 Wang Dayuan called the Javanese “the foremost of the barbarians of the Eastern Seas”.

## Ge-ying

*Nan chou i wu chih*, “A Record of Strange Things in the Southern Regions”, was written between 222 and 228 by Wan Chen, a prefect in Wu, the same kingdom which sent Kang Tai to Funan between 245 and 250 CE. He may have met the ambassadors from Funan and Lin Yi who came to Wu in 226. He mentions a country called *Ge-ying* which had volcanoes; its people wore bark cloth. *Ge-ying* traded with the Malay Peninsula and India, from whence it imported horses, a prestigious possession of nobles and warriors. It produced pearls, gold, jade, and areca nuts. It was not yet in contact with China. This description suggests that *Ge-ying* was in western Java, like Argyre. A mid-sixth-century Chinese manuscript quotes Wan Chen as saying that *Ge-ying* was the most powerful country in the southern barbarian lands.<sup>290</sup>

## He-lo-dan

He-lo-dan was a kingdom on *Shepo* which sent ambassadors to China six times between 430 and 452 (the Southern Dynasties period). Perhaps He-lo-dan replaced *Ge-ying* as the chief port in west Java. The first He-lo-dan mission had a specific objective: to complain to the emperor about corrupt Chinese port officials who oppressed Javanese merchants.<sup>291</sup> This suggests that private trade was already going on, and that it was active. The first ambassador brought cloth from India and Gandhara. In 436 an ambassador reported that the previous ruler of He-lo-dan had been replaced by *Pi-sha-ba-ma*, who complained

that “my country once had a large population and was prosperous” but “my neighbors vie with each other in attacking me”, and his son had deposed him.

## TARUMA (TÂRUMÂ)

*He-lo-dan* may be a transcription of Ciareuton, a river in West Java where the first two inscriptions of a Javanese king have been found. His name was Purnavarman, a devotee of Visnu; his kingdom was called Tarumanagara. Taruma, like several other Protohistoric Seasian kingdoms, is named after a place in India. India's Taruma is 20 kilometers north of Cape Comorin, south India; in Sanskrit its name means “indigo”. Tarumanagara reached its peak during King Purnavarman's reign; no more inscriptions appeared in west Java for 500 years. In the seventh century, Chinese sources refer to a country called *Do-lo-mo*, which sounds suspiciously similar to “Taruma”. It sent a mission between 666 and 669. Yijing, a famous Chinese monk who spent several years in Sumatra in the late seventh century, heard of a place called *He-ling*, to which several Chinese Buddhist pilgrims sailed. He-ling sent missions to China in 640, 648, and 666, after which there was a gap of 100 years. This may have been caused by the rise of Srivijaya, which may have exercised some authority over west Java. When He-ling resumed sending missions in 768, the kingdom may have been located in central Java. (For more on *Heling*, see Chapter 5.)

Seven inscriptions from Tarumanagara are known, all in Sanskrit: five are in the west Java highlands near modern Bogor, where King Purnavarman concentrated his activities. One is in the Tugu area of Jakarta, and one is in southwest Java (at Lebak, Banten).

The oldest inscription, from Ciareuton, west of Bogor, is devoted to a comparison between the footprints of the king and the god Visnu. This was a common way of referring respectfully to someone; footprints are one of the main icons by which Visnu and Buddha are represented. The king is making a veiled comparison of himself with the god who incarnated himself as King Rama in the *Ramayana*.

There are two inscriptions in another village, one of which, the Coffee Garden stone, may be 50 years earlier than the other, called Jambu (“guava”). The Coffee Garden inscription portrays two carved elephant footprints, between which is a text comparing the size of these footprints, said to be those of the elephant of the king (whose name is not mentioned) to those of Airavata, the mount of Indra, divinity who rules Mount Meru, where the gods live (Figure 4.6). This is another metaphor for the king's greatness. In this indirect manner the king was comparing himself to the god who symbolized kingship without directly claiming divinity. The other inscription in the village tells us that Purnavarman is the ruler of Taruma, describes him as skilled in destroying enemy cities, and displays his footprints carved in stone.

The inscription at Tugu, Jakarta, records that in the twenty-second year of his reign the king sponsored the digging of a canal to alleviate flooding caused by a river which ran past a palace. At the spot where the inscription was found, the Cakung River deviated from its ancient bed, now silted up. Geomorphological research shows that old beach ridges in the Tugu area have been eroded at one end, possibly the result of Purnavarman's diversion of the river.<sup>292</sup>



**Figure 4.6** Coffee Garden inscription. The inscription is written between the two footprints of an elephant, and compares them to the footprints of Airavata, the mount of Indra (king of the gods).

## THE CIBUAYA DELTA: BATUJAYA AND CIBUAYA

One of the seven Tarumanagara inscriptions lies near the source of the Cibuaya River, which flows into a delta 40 kilometers east of Jakarta. The site of Cibuaya in the eastern part of the delta has yielded three early Visnu images, one probably imported from south India, and another from northeast India, judging from the stone (which has not been scientifically analyzed). One of the statues closely resembles those from Chaiya, south Thailand (Figure 4.7). Two other possible Protoclassic statues are also known from Java, but not their precise find spots, which makes it impossible to derive useful information from them.



**Figure 4.7** Cibuaya Visnu images. The one on the left is probably of southern Indian provenance, while the one on the right is probably from the Bengal area.



One is a Visnu from somewhere near the village of Pekalongan; the other, made of local andesite, portrays Surya (the sun god). Visnu worshippers did not set up networks of pilgrimage equivalent to those of Buddhists, but there may have been a network of merchants linked through devotion to this deity. In modern India, devotees of Visnu are still closely connected with commerce.<sup>293</sup>

Archaeological excavations at Batujaya, on a silted-up branch of the Cibuaya River in the western part of the delta about 20 kilometers west of the Cibuaya site, between 2002 and 2006, resulted in significant discoveries, including large square foundations of brick and stone and clay votive tablets depicting Buddhist motifs associated with non-esoteric Buddhism stylistically dated to the sixth or seventh century. This layer may have been the site of the kingdom named Heling (see “Chinese sources and the transfer to central Java”, Chapter 5). The closest parallels for these tablets are found in Thailand. Radiocarbon dates from the site range from the first to sixth centuries CE. Ceramic evidence also suggests that the site was in frequent contact with India by the first or second century. The lowest levels yielded burials with Preclassic gold eye covers and bracelets. A gold bead of duodecahedron-shaped bead similar to examples in Oc-èò was also found.<sup>294</sup> The site may have continued to function as a commercial center until the ninth or tenth century, according to discoveries of Chinese ceramics associated with possible glass bead makers and a market.

Ceramics provide important data on the development of this region in the early centuries CE. They include many examples (30–40% of the assemblage) of earthenware found in other sites of the Buni Complex. Sherds of Romano-Indian rouletted ware comprise 5 per cent to 7 per cent of all ceramics; this proportion suggests that it was imported in commercial quantities.

Batujaya and Cibuaya may represent two slightly different historical phases, one Hindu, the other Buddhist. Judging by Faxian’s account, it is likely that Visnu worship predated Buddhism in Java.

## EARLY BUDDHA IMAGES

Art historians have assigned eight Buddha images to the Protoclassic period, based on style; no archaeological data on their discovery are available. These have been found in Sulawesi, Kalimantan, on the Khorat Plateau, at Nakhon Pathom, in north Champa, and in east Java. They vary in height from 20 to 100 centimeters. The main characteristic which unites them is the treatment of the robe: sharp-edged, with high folds. Early authorities considered them to be examples of Amaravati, Sri Lankan, or Gupta art, and to date from the fourth or fifth century.

Two statues were found in the area of Jember, east Java. Both are very damaged. They may have been products of a local atelier which combined elements of Sri Lankan and central Indian styles. One art historian has ascribed them to the fifth or sixth century.<sup>295</sup> Research at Batujaya has yielded no statues as yet. The Buddhist phase at Batujaya has been provisionally ascribed to the sixth or seventh century, but this is based mainly on general similarities with Dvaravati sites in Thailand. Batujaya has yielded radiocarbon dates of the early first millennium CE, but these dates are not directly associated with the tablets.

## NOTES

- 1 Sidebotham and Wendrich 2001.
- 2 Warmington 1928: 53.
- 3 Pagani 1990: v.
- 4 “Trans-Gangetic India as reconstructed in a manuscript map attached to the fourteenth-century MS” *Venet. Marc. 516(R)*. Wheatley 1983: 456.
- 5 For example, Mudar 1999; Obdeijn 1941.
- 6 Hutangkura 2014; see also “Type 3: Siam-Malay peninsula and the Seasian archipleago”, Chapter 3.
- 7 Manguin et al. 2006.
- 8 Bronson 1977.
- 9 O’Reilly 2007: 47–51; Manguin 2002: 75.
- 10 Miksic 2009b.
- 11 Smith 1999: 12.
- 12 Kulke 1990; Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 74.
- 13 Skilling 2005.
- 14 Manguin 2004: 304; Dalsheimer and Manguin 1998.
- 15 Wolters 1967: 74.
- 16 Wheatley 1973: 8.
- 17 Coedès 1968; de Casparis 1979.
- 18 Higham 1999.
- 19 Pichard 1976.
- 20 Baker 2014: 7–9.
- 21 Churchman 2010: 27.
- 22 Lockhart 2008: 7.
- 23 Stern 1968.
- 24 Tingley 2009: 2.
- 25 Nguyen-Long 2013: 2.
- 26 Taylor 1983a: 13.
- 27 Nguyen-Long 2013: 2; Tingley 2009: 3.
- 28 Taylor 2013: 16.
- 29 Maspero 1918: 9.
- 30 The Yue kingdom of the Spring and Autumn period, Nan Yue (204–111 BCE), the Hundred Yue, the later Dai Viet kingdom of the eleventh century on, and modern Vietnam are not necessarily related; see Churchman 2010: 27.
- 31 Taylor 1983a: 15.
- 32 Taylor 2013: 14.
- 33 Nguyen-Long 2013: 3.
- 34 Taylor 1983a: 24.
- 35 Taylor 2013: 17.
- 36 Nguyen-Long 2013: 8.
- 37 Taylor 2013: 19–20.
- 38 Taylor 1983a: 37.
- 39 Schweyer 2011: 24.
- 40 Taylor 1983a: 38–93.
- 41 Taylor 2013: 22.
- 42 Tingley 2009: 3.
- 43 Wang 1958: 31.



- 44 Taylor 2013: 24–25.
- 45 Nguyen et al. 2006: 221–225; Glover et al. 1996; Churchman 2010: 34.
- 46 Taylor 2013: 29.
- 47 Nguyen-Long 2013: 9–10.
- 48 Taylor 2013: 34.
- 49 Nguyen-Long 2013: 10–11.
- 50 Taylor 2013: 36.
- 51 Nguyen-Long 2013: 11.
- 52 Taylor 2013: 36–37.
- 53 Wheatley 1961: 47–8, 186–87; Briggs 1951.
- 54 Coedès 1968: 36.
- 55 Vickery 1998. Bayard (1992: 28) admitted that “Wolters justifiably criticizes archaeologists such as Bronson (1979) and myself who by implication assume that Funan somehow represents a radical departure from what had gone before”; Wolters 1982: 14.
- 56 Coedès 1968: 42.
- 57 Wang 1958: 51.
- 58 Wang 1958: 60.
- 59 Coedès 1947; Malleret 1959–63.
- 60 Le Thi Lien 2014: 119.
- 61 Vo Si Khai 2003: 65. This article contains details of many radiocarbon dates from the Mekong Delta. See also Miksic 2003: 25 for a photograph of a fifth-century wooden Buddha from Go Thap, and Tingley 2009: 127, for a photo of another from Binh Hoa.
- 62 Epigraphers have assigned numbers to inscriptions attributed to the ancient Khmer kingdom and give them the prefix “K”.
- 62 Malleret 1959–1963, 1960: II, 133–135, 193.
- 63 Higham 1989: 252.
- 64 Malleret 1960: 11, 101, 127–131.
- 65 Bellina 2003.
- 66 Francis 2002: 43–44, 215.
- 67 Malleret 1960: 11, 85–87.
- 68 For details on the archaeology of Oc-èo culture, see Vo Si Khai 2003.
- 69 Evans 1932: plate 28; Tan 2003: plates IV-11, IV-14, IV-15.
- 70 Evans 1927: 94; illustrated in Miksic 2009b: 71; see also Malleret 1960: plate LXXIII.
- 71 Wang 1958: 33.
- 72 Wolters 1967: 39, 61.
- 73 de Casparis 1975: 12.
- 74 Stark 1998: 194.
- 75 Stark 2006b: 100; Paris 1931, 1941.
- 76 Stark 2006b: 419.
- 77 Stark 1998: 191.
- 78 Dowling 1999.
- 79 Lavy 2003.
- 80 Stark 2006b: 100.
- 81 Fehrenback 2009.
- 82 Glover and Yamagata 1994: 89.
- 83 Fehrenbach 2009: 146.
- 84 Miksic and Yap 1990, 1992.
- 85 Briggs 1951: 33.

- 86 Reinecke et al. 2009.
- 87 Pottier 2005.
- 88 O'Reilly and Pheng Sytha 2001; O'Reilly, Dreisch, and Voen 2006.
- 89 Higham et al. 2014. For detailed descriptions of the gold leaves see Le 2011.
- 90 Rabindranath Tagore, "To Java", translated from his own Bengali original "Sri-Vijaya-Lakshmi", written at Batavia (Jakarta) on 21 August 1927. Sandhu 1973: vii.
- 91 Berg 1929.
- 92 Krom 1931.
- 93 van Leur 1955.
- 94 Marshall Sahlins 1981.
- 95 Wheatley 1973: 102–103, footnote 256.
- 96 Kathirithamby-Wells 2009.
- 97 Bosch 1952.
- 98 Kulke 1990; Christie 1995: 236–237.
- 99 Kulke 1978.
- 100 de Casparis 1956: 268, footnote 104.
- 101 Chakravarti 1978.
- 102 Anthony Reid (2015: 97) argued that it is better to avoid attaching labels such as "animism" or "shamanism" to the belief system of Protoclassic Seasia. They give an inaccurate impression of simplicity and primitiveness.
- 103 Ray 2014: 136.
- 104 Skilling 2007.
- 105 Ray 2014: 138.
- 106 Ray 2014: 142.
- 107 Wolters 1979.
- 108 Jamison 2008a.
- 109 Bühler 1980/1904: 18.
- 110 Ibid.: p. 16.
- 111 Bühler 1980/1904: 20; Jamison 2008: 7.
- 112 Ray 2014: 145.
- 113 Bühler 1980/1904: 103.
- 114 de Casparis 1991: 33.
- 115 de Casparis 1956: 218, note 40.
- 116 de Casparis 1986: 13.
- 117 Ibid.: p. 34.
- 118 Jamison 2008b.
- 119 Skilling 1997.
- 120 Steever 2008.
- 121 Ray 2014: 148.
- 122 Mair 1994: 736.
- 123 Carey 1992.
- 124 Pollock 2006. Pollock disagrees with the idea that Sanskrit could be used to express a different world view from that which it was used to convey originally, "civilisationalist indigenism". This book takes a different view. Cf. Daud Ali 2011 for further discussion.
- 125 de Casparis 1982: 124–125.
- 126 Damais 1947–50.
- 127 de Casparis 1982: 133.
- 128 de Casparis 1982: 136.
- 129 Sandhu 1973: 1.

- 130 Sandhu 1973: 1–2
- 131 *Purāṇas* (“old narratives”) are Sanskrit stories which in their original form probably date back several thousand years, but the dates of precise references are impossible to fix.
- 132 *Kathasaritsagara*; Wheatley 1983: 288
- 133 *Jātakaṭṭhavaṇṇanā*, Vol VI, book xxii, no. 539; Cowell 1895–1907, Vol. VI, pp. 19–37. Jataka 14: Majumdar 1986 I: 37, note 3. Merchants from Suvarnabhumi set sail from Barukaccha, in northwest India.
- 134 Sandhu 1973: 8, 85, citing A.K. Forbes (1856) *Rās Māla or Hindoo annals of the Province of Goozerat in Western India*. 2 Vols. London. Vol. II, p. 79, footnote 1. This is a Prakrit text from Gujarat, compiled in the medieval era, parts of which may be as early as the fifth century.
- 135 Sandhu 1973: 23–25
- 136 Bühler 1980: 32
- 137 Sandhu 1973: 26
- 138 Sandhu 1973: 28
- 139 Wheatley 1973: 107, footnote 273
- 140 Ivanoff 1999
- 141 Wheatley 1959; Murfett et al. 1999; Sopher 1977: 60–61
- 142 Wheatley 1961: 15–21
- 143 Wheatley 1961: 16
- 144 Wheatley 1961: 47–51 has translated the major sources on *Panpan*.
- 145 Wheatley 1973: 106–107, footnote 273
- 146 O’Connor 1972: 39
- 147 Coedès 1928: 25
- 148 Lavy 2014: 169
- 149 Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 155–159
- 150 Ibid.: pp. 149–155
- 151 Ibid.: pp. 130–131
- 152 Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 133–134
- 153 Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 166
- 154 Ibid.: p. 180
- 155 Ibid.: p. 184
- 156 Borell et al. 2014
- 157 Bellina-Pryce and Silapanth 2006a: 384–385; Bellina-Pryce and Silapanth 2006b: 281
- 158 Idem
- 159 Glover 1996b: 65; Veeraprasert 1992: 156, 159
- 160 A. Srisuchat 1996: 250
- 161 Wicks 1992: 221
- 162 Wheatley 1983: 395–397; Vickery 2011: 372–376
- 163 Miksic 2010: 218–220
- 164 Southworth 2004: 218
- 165 Filliozat 1994; Filliozat 1969
- 166 Coedès 1968: 65
- 167 Guy 2009
- 168 Hardy 2009: 114
- 169 Southworth 2011: esp. 114
- 170 Wheatley 1983: 394
- 171 Vickery 2011: 367
- 172 Hardy 2009
- 173 Clémentin-Ojha and Manguin 2007: 108

- 174 Idem.
- 175 Guy 2009: 138.
- 176 Glover and Yamagata 1997: 76.
- 177 The excavations at Tra Kieu are summarized by Glover and Nguyen 2011, Yamagata 2011, Glover and Yamagata 1997, Prior 2000, Southworth 2004, and Prior and Glover 2003.
- 178 Prior 2000.
- 179 Thanik 2014: 119.
- 180 Moore 1992: 29.
- 181 Vallibhotama 1984; Indrawooth 2004.
- 182 Glover 1989; Higham 2002.
- 183 Higham 2002: 218.
- 184 Wicks 1992: 86.
- 185 Wicks 1992: 23.
- 186 Wicks 1992: 221.
- 187 Boisselier 1968; Bronson 1979; Higham 1989: 275.
- 188 Bacus 2004a: 263, fig. 11.4; Glover 1996b: 64. For a Vietnamese example from Sahuynh, see Solheim 1984: 144, fig. 31.
- 189 Loofs 1979: 346–347.
- 190 Higham 1989: 272, 278.
- 191 Coedès 1928: 16–20; Picard 1955: 137–149; Clarke 2014.
- 192 Bronson 1979: 323, 325; Higham 1989: 272.
- 193 Lertcharnrit 2014.
- 194 Khunsong et al. 2011.
- 195 Higham and Thosarat 1998: 183.
- 196 Clarke 2014.
- 197 Welch 1989.
- 198 Coedès 1956.
- 199 Lorillard 2014.
- 200 See Luce 1960: 308–309; Chen 1982; Luce 1961: 90–91; Parker 1893: 12; all cited and discussed in Aung-Thwin 2005: 14–15.
- 201 For an initial list of diagnostic criteria of Pyu culture, see Aung-Thaw 1968. For expanded or revised lists, see Myint Aung 1970; Moore 2006; Moore 2009: 108–109; Hudson 2004; Wicks 1992; Gutman 1978; Nyunt Han, Aung Kyaing, Khyit San Win, and Thein Lwin 2007: 4–7; Gutman and Hudson 2004: 160; and Aung-Thwin 2005: 13–42.
- 202 See Blagden 1917; Blagden 1919; Beckwith 2002a; Beckwith 2002b; Shafer 1942–43; Krech 2012.
- 203 Unpublished presentation by Tampawaddy Win Maung; see also “Ancient Stone Inscriptions Found in Myittha” 2013.
- 204 The distinction between an archaeological culture and an ethnolinguistic group is one which many scholars, including Aung-Thaw 1968; Myint Aung 1970; Aung-Thwin 2005; Hudson 2004 and most recently Hudson 2014; Moore 2006, 2009, and more recently Myo Nyunt Aung 2014, do not make.
- 205 This idea is generally embraced by Burmese scholars, and argued more recently by Hudson 2004, who is quoted and supported by Aung-Thwin 2005, who argues that the Pyu were the predecessors of Burmans/Burmese, not the Mons, inclusive of the Buddhist religion, writing, and tradition.
- 206 Moore 2007: 155.
- 207 Moore 2007: 156.
- 208 Aung Thaw 1968: 17, 45, 49; San Shwe 2002: 8; Moore 2007: 156.
- 209 Moore 2007: 157.
- 210 Miksic 2007: 59; Moore 2007: 162–165.

- 211 Miksic 2007: 136; Moore 2007: 184.
- 212 Moore 2007: 181.
- 213 Aung Thaw 1972: 13; Guy 1995; Hudson 2004: 134; Luce 1985: 66, 149; Moore 2007: 184; Nan Pan Hla 1992.
- 214 Hudson 2004: 134; Miksic 2007: 137; Moore 2007: 186.
- 215 Miksic 2007: 137; Moore 2007: 184.
- 216 Moore 2007: 193.
- 217 Aung Myint 1998; Miksic 2007: 233; Moore 2007: 193–194.
- 218 Moore 2007: 194.
- 219 Chen 1979.
- 220 Myo 2014: 348.
- 221 Myo 2014: 348–349.
- 222 Myo 2014: 350.
- 223 Aung Myint 1998; Aung Thaw 1972: 17; Moore 2007: 167.
- 224 Miksic 2007: 352; Moore 2007: 167.
- 225 Kala 1960: 116; see also Goh 2012: 353; and *in passim* Miksic 2007: 352.
- 226 Luce 1985: 48, 126–127; Miksic 2007: 352; Moore 2007: 173.
- 227 Hudson 2004; Miksic 2007: 353; Moore 2007: 169–171.
- 228 Brown 2001: 38; Dupont 1959: 477–480; Duroiselle 1930: 179; Guy 1997: 88; Guy 1999: 19; Luce 1985: 136–139; Moore 2007: 175–179; Stargardt 1995a, Stargardt 1995b: 201; Stargardt 2000b: 23, 25, quoted in Moore 2007.
- 229 It is Myo Nyunt Aung’s contention that Wadi predated Sri Ksetra and other “Pyu” sites; see Myo 2014. There is insufficient evidence to support this hypothesis, notably the absence of carbon dates.
- 230 Moore 2009: 103; Moore 2007: 25; Wyatt 1997: 690.
- 231 Moore 2009: 108.
- 232 See Myo 2014.
- 233 Gutman and Hudson 2004: 160; Myint Aung 1970.
- 234 Aung Thaw carried out the excavations in the 1960s; KKG refers to the nearby village of Kokkogwa to the southwest of Beikthano; see Aung Thaw 1968 and Moore 2007: 156–158.
- 235 Hudson and Nyein Lwin 2012; the conclusion of which is unquestioningly reiterated in Hudson 2014: 6. The results of a small sample size (in most cases one to two dates to date an entire site); for example: using OZM353 to date an entire cemetery in Halin (see Hudson 2014: 7), should be viewed with caution. Hudson’s progress report of 2011, “Radiocarbon dating [of] organic content of bricks from early urban sites in Myanmar/Burma”, demonstrates other instances when limited samples were used to draw generalizations about early Burmese cultures; see Hudson 2011.
- 236 Moore 2007: 133.
- 237 Moore 2007: 134.
- 238 Khyit San Win 2004; Khyit San Win 2005; Nyunt Han et al. 2007.
- 239 Moore 2007: 156.
- 240 Hudson and Lustig 2008.
- 241 Gutman and Hudson 2013: 19; Hudson 2014: 12.
- 242 Hudson 2014: 6.
- 243 Aung Myint 1998; Aung Thaw 1968; Hudson 2004; Myint Aung 1970; Moore and Win Maung 2006; Moore and Than Swe 2006; Moore 2007; Moore 2009; Stargardt 1990. See also the special issue of *Asian Perspectives* 2001 on Burma. The most recent publication by Hudson assumes unquestioningly that Burmese cities were constructed around the second and third centuries CE; see Hudson 2014.
- 244 Miksic 2000.
- 245 Miksic 2001.

- 246 Than Htike 2013.
- 247 Aung Thaw 1968; Gutman 1978; Hudson 2004; Myint Aung 1970; Moore and Win Maung 2006; Moore 2007: 136; Moore 2009; Wicks 1992.
- 248 Hla Tun Pru 2004, quoted in Moore 2007: 136.
- 249 Aung Thaw 1968: 2.
- 250 Duroiselle 1925; Duroiselle 1926: 83; see also Moore 2007: 136.
- 251 San Win 1996.
- 252 Blagden 1917; San Win 2001; see also San Win 2003 and Tun Aung Chain 2003.
- 253 Gutman and Hudson 2004; Hudson 2007.
- 254 Gutman and Hudson 2012/201313: 21.
- 255 Gutman and Hudson 2012/201313: 22.
- 256 Guy 1997: 89.
- 257 Moore 2007: 140.
- 258 See Wicks 1992; Gutman 1978; and Moore 2007: 142–143.
- 259 Gutman 1978: 13; see also Moore 2007: 143.
- 260 See Gutman 1978; Wicks 1992.
- 261 See Hudson 2014.
- 262 See Miksic 2000; Miksic 2001.
- 263 Wolters 1967: 162. Van Tuijn 1932 describes sites with beads in Tulangbawang, Lampung.
- 264 Wolters 1967: 165.
- 265 Groeneveldt 1960 [1880]: 61.
- 266 Groeneveldt 1960 [1880]: 68.
- 267 Endang 2002; Budisantoso and Tri Marhaeni S. 2002, 2005, 2007; Manguin, Soeroso, and Charras 2006; Nurhadi Rangkuti 2008; Tri Marhaeni 2010: 40–44; Adhyatman and Redjeki Arifin 1993: 28–29.
- 268 Tri Marhaeni 2010; Koestoro et al. 1998; Dalsheimer and Manguin 1998.
- 269 Dalsheimer and Manguin 1998: 97.
- 270 Christie 1990a: 48.
- 271 Wheatley 1961: 26–36, 105.
- 272 Wheatley 1961: 32.
- 273 S.R. Das, “Rājābādāṅgā: 1962”, *Asiatic Society*, Calcutta; cited in Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 216.
- 274 Zolkarnian Hassan, S. Chia and Hamid Mohd Isa 2011.
- 275 Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 298; Nik Hassan Shuhaimi bin Nik Abdul Rahman and Kamaruddin bin Zakaria 1993; Nik Hassan Shuhaimi bin Nik Abdul Rahman and Othman Mohd. Yatim 1990; Allen 1988; Nik Hassan Shuhaimi bin Nik Abdul Rahman 2011.
- 276 Gibson-Hill 1952.
- 277 Manguin 1993b: 256.
- 278 Wang 1958: 33.
- 279 That is, approximately 600 tons; Li 1979: 90.
- 280 Wang 1958: 38.
- 281 Evans 1927, 1928a, 1928b, 1932; Tan 2003.
- 282 Evans 1927; illustrated in Miksic 2009: 71; see also Malleret 1960: plate LXXIII.
- 283 Glover 1996b: 64, 1998: 26; Renfrew 1975: 41–42.
- 284 Sutayasa 1972; Walker and Santoso 1977.
- 285 Begley 1996–2004.
- 286 Berggren and Jones 2000: 75–76, footnote 51.
- 287 Laffan 2005.
- 288 Legge 1886: 113.
- 289 Wolters 1967: 161.



- 290 Wolters 1967: 49–70; Appendix A.
- 291 Wolters 1967: 165.
- 292 Noorduyt and Verstappen 1972; Vogel 1925; Chhabra 1965: 93–97; Sarkar 1972: 1–12.
- 293 Dalsheimer and Manguin 1998: 110.
- 294 Manguin and Agustijanto Indrajaya 2011; Hasan Djafar 2010.
- 295 Dupont 1959.

# 5

## EARLY CLASSIC

600 to 900 CE

The inception of the Early Classic is dated to 600 CE because at this time local sources, both historical and archaeological, become adequate to enable scholars to rely mainly on them to reconstruct Seasian society. Records of the Tang dynasty, Arabo-Persian sources, and Indian inscriptions contain much valuable information on Seasia during this period.

Several major changes took place at the beginning of the seventh century. Funan disappeared. New centers of Khmer civilization appeared in southern Laos and at Sambor Prei Kuk. New cultural foci appeared in the Ayeyarwadi basin, especially at Sri Ksetra, while Beikthano, Halin, and other Pro-toclassic centers declined. The Dvaravati cultural complex (some have said “state”) arose. Srivijaya appeared and became a center of Buddhism and the main link between China, India, and the Persian Gulf. A major center of civilization appeared in central Java.

French historian George Coedès characterized the eighth century as a “troubled” time.<sup>1</sup> He perceived Cambodia as losing the unity it had enjoyed under Funan and splitting into two groups known to the Chinese as Land Zhenla and Water Zhenla. The Sanjaya (*Sañjaya*) family appeared in central Java and sent marauding fleets as far as Cambodia and even China.<sup>2</sup> In 767, invaders from Java and other southern islands almost reach Sontay in Vietnam before they were defeated.<sup>3</sup> “Dark people” from Java attacked Nha trang in 774 and 787, and burnt a temple. Around the same time the king of Srivijaya founded a temple at Nakhon Si Thammarat, peninsular Thailand. The Sanjaya in central Java shared sovereignty with another (possibly related) family, the Sailendra (*Śailendra*). In 802, according to a later inscription found at Sdok Kak Thom, now in Thailand, King Jayavarman II declared independence from Java. Michael Vickery is skeptical that this Java was the island of this name, preferring to interpret it as Champa, but he acknowledges that Austronesian language and Javanese art were influential in Cambodia at this time.<sup>4</sup>

On the whole, the Early Classic was marked by increasing stability. Much larger mandalas appeared, though they were not “states” in the sense generally implied by that term. They were areas of intense cultural, economic, and political interaction.

## EARLY CLASSIC ECONOMY

Early Classic Seasia exhibited a wide range of economic systems. The monetization of mainland Seasia's economy had begun in mainland Seasia in the Protoclassic. Coinage appeared in insular Seasia about 300 years later, around the beginning of the ninth century. Although in 800 coinage existed both on the Seasian mainland and in major islands of the archipelago, thereafter the paths of monetary development in the two regions diverged. Coinage disappeared from the archaeological record of the mainland, not to reappear until the arrival of Europeans. Much activity on the mainland which we would consider "economic" was subsumed under other categories; the distribution of commodities was organized by politics or conducted through barter. In the insular realm, coinage came to play an increasingly important role.

In both mainland and island Seasia, "the economy" was shaped by the fact that control over labour was much more highly esteemed and emphasized than other types of assets. The social structure of the region (rather like that of China at the same period) was predicated upon the notion that it was the fate of everyone to "belong" to someone else of higher status, in the sense of being part of a patron-client relationship in which both parties were expected to respect a set of obligations, thus creating a sort of social safety net. Lower-status people in most societies were expected to form part of the retinue of someone of higher status, and to perform certain duties for him or her in return for specific benefits, mainly protection.

Much of what is known about the Seasian economy has to be inferred from inscriptions about other matters, especially religion, or drawn from Chinese, Indian, and Arabo-Persian records. These sources tell us about long-distance commerce, but there is almost no information about trade within Seasia, which must have been much more frequent. We have a few hints about this; for instance a ninth-century inscription from Champa realm mentions a court dignitary with the title *puhawang*, usually understood to mean a ship's captain, who made two journeys to Java.<sup>5</sup>

## LABOUR AND HUMAN RELATIONS

Seasian inscriptions contain various words which have been translated as "slave". Early European sources also refer to "slaves" as a major component of Seasian population. This single word does not do justice to the range of relationships which existed in ancient Seasia, and which still shape human relationships in the region. People could be enslaved for debt, as war captives, or could sell themselves. As a result of accepting someone as a "slave", however, the master took responsibility for the welfare of that person. Of course, not all patrons fulfilled their duty faithfully, but the ideal was frequently approximated in practice.

In many matters having to do with early modern Seasia, one cannot simply read Chinese or European sources as literal descriptions of reality. References to "slavery" have to be analyzed in the context of the place and period in which they are situated for, of course, changes occurred over time. The complex social institutions which governed the allocation of social and physical resources and determined the

economic choices of individuals suggest that the notion of “the economy” in early modern Seasia is a concept in need of definition according to the local situation.

## INDONESIAN MONEY

In Indonesia, a bimetallic currency system using gold and silver coins appeared around 800. The oldest coins are found in Java, but they may have been made in Sumatra, probable source of the metal used to make them. The earliest are decorated with stamped designs known as “sandalwood flowers” on one side, and a letter in Devanagari script denoting the weight of the coin on the other. Another type of gold coin consisted of semi-spherical objects known as *piloncitos* (“sugar cubes” in Spanish; they are found in the Philippines as well as Indonesia). These coins were made for several hundred years.

The concept of individual wealth seems to have existed, and indeed was a social preoccupation. In Early Classic Java, wealth was symbolized by statues of a fat man seated on a throne, resting one foot on a jar of gems. A mongoose sits on one of his knees; the man squeezes his body, so that from the animal’s mouth a stream of jewels spurts out. He evolved from a *yaksa* 2,000 years ago to become a *lokapala* or *dikpala*, the guardian of the north. In Buddhism he is known as Jambhala or Kuwera in Hinduism, known in Indian mythology as one of eight generals or Masters of the Horses, all emanations of Vaisravana. It was much easier to rise in social status through economic success in the insular realm than on the mainland.

## URBANIZATION

One of the great mysteries of Seasian archaeology concerns the origins and nature of early cities. Most research on the Early Classic period has focused on temples, statuary, and inscriptions. Daily life has received scant attention. The largest ceremonial centers in Seasia during the first millennium CE were erected in central Java, but even there no urban settlements have yet been identified. Large-scale man-made features (e.g., channels or canals) have been discovered in the Musi River valley of South Sumatra together with porcelain of the Tang dynasty, but no large-scale surveys have been conducted which are needed to establish the density or size of the inhabited area. Archaeological data is still insufficient to prove that a settlement hierarchy existed there before 1400 CE.<sup>6</sup>

In the Ayeyarwadi, Sri Ksetra became one of the largest ramparted enclosures built in Classic Seasia. Much of the site has been looted, but enough remains to demonstrate that it was one of the most sophisticated societies of the Early Classic. The architects who built brick structures there developed, perhaps independently, the true arch, something few engineers in the ancient world could conceive of.

Foreign sources do not give precise information on settlements. They describe complexes surrounded by wooden palisades,<sup>7</sup> but it is impossible to tell whether these were cities or palaces. One translation of a Chinese source says of Sanfoqi (Jambi) during the eleventh and twelfth centuries: “The wall of the city is built of bricks, and measures several tens of li around. . . . The people either live scattered about

outside the city, or on the water on rafts of boards covered over with reeds, and these are exempt from taxation.”<sup>8</sup> The word translated as “city” would be better termed a palace complex.

At least five institutions or places could form the cores of a more complex settlement hierarchy at different times and places: palaces, forts, temples, markets, and workshops. All these have to be analyzed at each site to understand how the various institutions connected with these physical sites interacted with one another, how they evolved, how their development was correlated, and how much causation can be attributed to them in the development of a settlement system. In Seasia there is evidence that each of these five factors played the primary role at some time and place, but never in isolation from the other factors.

Urban evolution in Sumatra followed two distinct lines. One line probably originated from palisaded royal enclaves wherein religious and administrative functions were performed, and where a supporting staff sometimes reaching several thousand people lived. Literary sources lead us to suspect that some productive activities such as metal working were also conducted in these royal enclaves, but they were not sufficiently intensive or protracted to leave archaeologically impressive remains. Metal slag and moulds might have been disposed of outside the palace, perhaps in a manner which dispersed them over a wide area. These royal compounds may have been adjoined by other self-contained compounds belonging to high nobles. These compounds could have contained as many as 5,000 or 10,000 people but may not have been marked by large or permanent architecture, and were mainly centers of consumption, not production, so their remains could have been evanescent. Terms referring to such elite enclaves in inscriptions include *kadātuan*, *shibira*, and *rajagraha*.

There is also a tradition of fortifying villages in Sumatra, so the presence of fortifications is not a criterion for distinguishing “urban” from “non-urban” sites. Archaeologists have discovered sites surrounded by ramparts from Aceh to Lampung, but they are not as numerous or as large as in Thailand. In lowlands where settlements were strung out along river banks, this form of defense would not have been feasible. Palembang in the mid-nineteenth century was 6.5 to 8 kilometers long, but one house wide.<sup>9</sup> Foreign enclaves may have formed the nuclei around which large settlements formed, but the first evidence for these does not appear until the Middle Classic period.

Linguistic and historical information show that the English concept of a “city” assumes a correlation between activities and formal traits which in Sumatra did not interact in the same way as in Europe. The indigenous concept of settlement in Sumatra does not distinguish clearly between agricultural and non-agricultural residential areas, nor between habitation clusters and the agricultural land between as well as beyond dwellings. Important linguistic categories included housing surrounded by agricultural land controlled by a lineage claiming descent from a common ancestor; and subdivisions of these units wherein individuals related by descent, marriage, or ethnicity resided. After economic production became concentrated in small areas, which coincided with the beginning of long-term foreign settlement in the early second millennium, subdivisions based on occupation also came into existence. To what extent during the pre-colonial period was it possible for individuals such as goldsmiths to move from one settlement to another? We have no data on this point.

Another interesting conclusion is that urbanization in Java proceeded at approximately the same pace and assumed similar forms as in Sumatra. This is unexpected given differences between the two

islands in history, culture, environment, and population density. The complex of cultural factors which determines the relationship between settlement pattern, agricultural land, and geographic dispersal of commercial activity, however, was sufficiently similar between the two islands to bring about such a result. In regard to proportion of population living in cities, Sumatra is today more highly urbanized than Java. There may be a correlation here with a higher percentage of descendants of immigrants in Sumatra than in Java.

More research should be done to clarify the manner in which society functioned in the “segmentary urban complexes” of the pre-colonial period. Seasia is not unique in having cities divided into quarters on ethnic, status, or occupational grounds; these are found in many other cultures and periods. Seasian cities, however, may have been exceptional in the degree of autonomy which the various segments enjoyed, and in the importance of descent (real or notional) as a criterion for residence.

Geographers have adopted the term *desakota* from the modern words for “village” and “city” to refer to a different type of settlement from the western concept of “city”. These settlements may be very large but lack a compact center of dense population.<sup>10</sup> Until the late twentieth century, many Indonesian cities resembled collections of neighbourhoods rather than unified urban conglomerations. This situation struck the consciousness of early European visitors to Indonesia:

Imagine a forest of coconut trees, bamboos, pineapples and bananas, through which passes quite a beautiful river all covered with boats; Put in this forest an incredible number of houses made of canes, reeds, and bark, and arrange them in such a manner that they sometimes form streets, sometimes separate quarters; divide these various quarters by meadows and woods; Spread throughout this forest as many people as you see in your towns, when they are well-populated; You will form a pretty accurate idea of Achen [Aceh] and you will agree that a city of this new style can give pleasure to passing strangers.<sup>11</sup>

Scholars have noted the probable existence of this phenomenon on mainland Seasia in Middle Classic times.<sup>12</sup> The same pattern may well have existed in central Java in the Early Classic. A similar concept of “civilization without cities” was formulated for ancient Egypt; no cities have yet been discovered in the Nile region from the Old Kingdom, when the first and largest pyramids were built.<sup>13</sup>

## CITIES AS FORTS: WARFARE IN THE EARLY CLASSIC PERIOD

Warfare in Seasia, both tropical and equatorial, may have been conducted to control labour instead of land, which would lead to a different relationship between warfare and settlement patterns than in other regions where control over land was the principal objective in armed conflict. In some situations, for example, in the ancient Near East, warfare favoured the formation of settlements in which the population was densely packed between walls. It has been argued that the converse is also true, that is, that a dispersed settlement pattern in the Philippines can be interpreted as evidence that warfare was not important there.<sup>14</sup> A large number of moated sites have been discovered in northeast Thailand, but not



all were accompanied by earthworks; perhaps only earthworks are proof of sites designed for defense against attack.<sup>15</sup> At other sites the moats may have served for water storage, fish husbandry, flood control, or symbols. Research indicates that many of the moats and ramparts may have been modifications of natural features to deal with increased climatic instability rather than defensive.<sup>16</sup>

Although Indonesian sources refer to warfare as early as the seventh century, permanent earthworks which may have been fortifications have only been identified at one Classic-period site (Tulang Bawang, Lampung, Sumatra). Indonesian societies (particularly those of lowland Sumatra) usually responded to imminent armed conflict by flight rather than fighting. Palisades of perishable material are mentioned in Chinese sources of the Early Classic, but do not tell us what their function was: perhaps they were mainly used to divide elite compounds from the dwellings of commoners.

A combination of trade and warfare could stimulate hierarchies of settlement in societies where all sites were initially villages.<sup>17</sup> Srivijaya's first inscriptions appear in the context of both warfare and trade, but no fortified city has been found at Palembang. Perhaps the equatorial region of Seasia possessed warfare and trade, but lacked another necessary factor, limited or circumscribed agricultural land, so farmers were willing to move suddenly. In northeast Thailand the opposite may have occurred: Trade was insufficient to enable rulers of sites with circumscribed agricultural land to reach a higher level of dominance through warfare. When a settlement hierarchy did evolve in northeast Thailand, this may have been correlated with expanding trade. Although a large complex of sites has been found in west Java (the Buni Complex) which date from the transitional period between Preclassic and Protoclassic, not enough data have been collected to indicate whether any hierarchy existed. Even less is known for other sites of early epigraphy (Kutai and southeast Sumatra).

The first known Seasian settlement hierarchies were on the mainland: in the Red River and Mekong Deltas. Their development was probably due not to warfare, but to transport facilities. Research in equatorial America has demonstrated the great advantage of water transport: it requires only one-fifth the energy to move the same amount of freight as land transport.<sup>18</sup> Some archaeologists now believe that transport was the most significant factor which shaped Classic Mexican urbanization.<sup>19</sup>

In maritime Seasia, transport was not sufficiently limited to be an effective incentive for people to live in dense agglomerations. Four factors probably were responsible for the "open" character of the cities in maritime Seasia: geographical features combined with maritime skill, social tolerance of high mobility, and an environment which encouraged the transport of commodities over long distances. In Thailand and Java the first cities grew in hinterlands, where they formed nodes on dendritic hierarchies. In Sumatra, traditional riverine transport networks may have favoured the development of patterns more closely resembling a central-place model.<sup>20</sup>

In Mesoamerica, trade appears in archaeology whereas tributary exchange does not. "If we had to rely on archaeology alone, the Aztec Empire would not exist, though the Texcoco regional marketing system would."<sup>21</sup> This is similar to the situation in Seasia. We do not yet understand the role of Seasian central places in economic hierarchies or local markets, but these will be easier to reconstruct than the relationships between members of the same mandala.

In the Aztec realm, provinces closer to the capital were smaller than those farther away. It has been suggested that this may have been simply the result of greater population density near the center, but it

would also be a logical situation to encounter if a mandala system existed. Mayan epigraphy and iconography often glorify rulers in a very personal style. This suggests that Mayan rulers strove to maintain an image of royal charisma like that of the Seasian *maharajadirajas*. Loss of charisma had immediate political consequences in Yucatan as in Seasia.<sup>22</sup>

The study of settlement patterns and hierarchies offers the best hope of increasing our understanding of cultural innovations in Seasia, and the utility of studying Seasia as a region. Exchange patterns must be a principal focus of research. If we are able to determine the degree to which interaction between tropical and equatorial Seasia was responsible for the evolution of settlement hierarchies, then this knowledge would deepen our understanding of the importance of communication processes in the general realm of cultural innovation.

## ARCHITECTURE: TEMPLE BUILDING

We cannot reconstruct prehistoric Seasian beliefs, but in the Protoclassic and Early Classic periods, traces of a belief that ancestor spirits could affect the living are preserved in written sources and place names like Dieng (*Di Hyang*, “the ancestors”) where the first large temple complex in central Java was built in the late seventh century. Ancestors were thought to reside in high places.

Early scholars believed that the Seasian temples were used in a continuation of ancestor worship. They thought Seasian rulers’ ashes were buried under the temples and worshipped in the form of Indian deities. It is still often said that Angkor Wat is the funerary monument of Suryavarman II. It is now realized that ashes found in ritual deposit boxes under the temples were placed there as part of ceremonies intended to consecrate the shrine, and are not remains of human cremations.<sup>23</sup> Rulers’ ashes were probably treated as are those of the dead in contemporary India and Bali: thrown into the river or the sea rather than kept in temples. This practice continued throughout the Classic period.

Jacques Dumarçay said that statues in Seasian temples were reflections of the god within whose form the ruler merged after death could manifest him/herself, and that the temples were replicas of a ruler’s realm or palace. The word *prasada* is often used in Sanskrit to denote a temple. The word literally means “mountain”, but it can also refer to “the seat or platform of a god”; it can also refer to a palace. In India, it is also believed that a statue or icon in a temple is a receptacle into which the god can be invoked to descend, or a conduit for communication between humans and the divine. The Sanskrit word was used in ancient Seasian inscriptions and was later adopted into local languages, becoming *prasat* in Thai, and *pyatthat* in modern Burmese. In Seasia, *prasat* can also refer to a complex of religious buildings, or the tower of the main edifice in a religious complex. One reason why Indian architects began to build stone towers instead of wood or artificial caves for temples is that they wanted to recreate caves on mountains.<sup>24</sup>

The word *candi* (pronounced “chandi”) began to appear in inscriptions at the beginning of the Early Classic period; in modern Indonesia it denotes any architectural remains from the Classic period, such as gates, bathing places, etc. Inscriptions also use Sanskrit terms such as *caitya-grha* (a place containing a relic, such as a stupa), or *vihara* (monastery). Zoetmulder defined the word *candi* as “temple or sanctuary in which the deity descends, is worshipped, and contact with it is achieved”.

The word *candi* was probably derived from Sanskrit *caitya*. In early Buddhist sources *caitya* denoted a mound erected over the ashes of a dead person. A popular derivation connects the word with *Candika*, a form of Kali or Durga, but this is unlikely. In Thai, the analogous word is *cedi* (“stupa”). In Cham, it is *kalan*.

## THE *SIMA*

The word *sima* means “boundary” (such as a village or neighbourhood boundary) in Sanskrit and Pali; in Thailand the word is transliterated *sema*. Inscriptions in India, Sri Lanka, Java, Champa, Myanmar, and Cambodia (but not Sumatra) sometimes specify officials, apparently tax collectors, who were not allowed to enter specific areas. These inscriptions allocated labour, land, and other resources to the upkeep of temples, including the priests who officiated there. The inscriptions often contain dire curses against those who disturb the land inside the *sima* limits which will last “as long as the moon and the sun”. Javanese *sima* inscriptions often mention *sang hyang Brahma*, but not referring to the creator god of the Hindu trinity; they mean a sacrificial fire which was an important component of the ritual establishing this institution.<sup>25</sup> *Sima* inscriptions sometimes contain long lists of people of various occupations who were allowed or forbidden to enter the *sima*, thus inadvertently preserving important economic information.

In fifteenth-century Myanmar, King Dhammaceti issued an inscription stating that monks could only be properly ordained in a hall which stood on land which had been declared a *sima* and where water-pouring and other purification rituals had been carried out, and that the king had to approve of these rituals for them to be valid. This was probably a periodic practice of kings in Myanmar (and possibly Ayutthaya) which enabled them to reduce the amount of land controlled by monasteries when their share of the land in a kingdom became very large.<sup>26</sup> This problem does not seem to have affected Java, but the king’s permission there was probably necessary to set up a *sima*.

In Khorat, northeast Thailand, especially in the Chi River basin around Muang Fa Daed, a specific type of stone was developed in the Early Classic to mark the boundaries of the *sima*.<sup>27</sup> The stones were decorated with various motifs, including scenes from narrative texts such as the *Jataka* tales or the Life of Buddha. Buddhist texts prescribe the use of objects termed *nimitta* to demarcate the *sima*, but a wide variety of materials and shapes can be used for this purpose. These *sema* stones, as they are called in Thai, eventually influenced the monastic complexes of Cambodia and the rest of Thailand, but are not found elsewhere such as in Myanmar or Vietnam. Similarly shaped stones begin to appear in east Java in the thirteenth century, though they are rare. In the Postclassic they were used on mountain sanctuaries to denote backrests for invisible deities invoked to sit on altars; they were also used for some of the earliest Muslim tombstones.

In Java, the institution continued into the colonial/Islamic era, when *perdikan* were established on behalf of religious schools and royal tombs. As in ancient times, *sima* zones constituted tax exemptions which attracted craftsmen who were paid in coinage, and the religious schools themselves became engaged in various enterprises. In Thailand, the boundary markers or *sema* stones became works of art, with shapes reminiscent of *kala makara* designs.

In India, at least at some places and times, temple servants were paid wages or given land. One inscription from Tanjor, the Chola capital dated 1011 CE, lists more than 600 people who were paid to supply goods or services; one was a superintendent of goldsmiths.<sup>28</sup>

## EARLY BUDDHISM

We owe much of our knowledge of early Buddhism to Chinese monks who underwent great hardships to travel to India to learn Sanskrit and to collect texts to take back to China with them, where teams translated them into Chinese. Most of the Buddhist texts written in India were lost as the result of the decline of popularity of Buddhism, reversion to Brahminical religions, and conversion to Islam. Without the Chinese translations, we would know very little about Buddhist speculations during the sixth to ninth centuries, when Buddhism was undergoing rapid evolution.

Up to the mid-seventh century, Chinese pilgrims took the overland route to India. By the late seventh century most were travelling by sea. One of these monks, Yijing, left two memoirs which tell us much about the role of the sea route in spreading Buddhism, but also about the general nature of maritime communication during the Early Classic. Paying passengers regularly sailed from Indonesia to India and China on merchant vessels. These ships stopped at ports in Java, Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula. Sometimes the monks elected to study in local monasteries for years, or even the rest of their lives. These ports obviously offered congenial environments for visiting scholars, implying a high degree of cosmopolitanism, material prosperity, maritime commercial activity, and intellectual curiosity.

Indonesian Buddhism underwent radical change during the Early Classic. The oldest and longest surviving text is a 42-verse Sanskrit manuscript entitled *Sang hyang kamahāyānan Mantranaya* accompanied by commentary in Old Javanese, the date of which is eleventh century at the latest but could be several hundred years older. Rulers in India provided facilities for Sumatran monks. Communication and transmission of ideas was obviously flourishing along the sea lanes.

In the late eighth century, work began on one of the largest Buddhist monuments ever built: Borobudur in central Java. In the mid-ninth century the Hindu riposte, Loro Jonggrang at Prambanan, was the tallest building in Seasia. Around 830 CE a ship carrying one of the richest cargoes of that time sank between the South China Sea and Java Sea. It lay there for 11 centuries before it was rediscovered off the island of Belitung in 1999. This site provides us with a completely unexpected snapshot of an instant in time, a disaster which must have been a great disappointment to many people, but which preserved an immense amount of information which would otherwise have been lost. To add an additional complication to the story, the vessel was an Arabo-Persian dhow which sank precisely when Persian sailors were collecting experiences which were later collected in the *Arabian Nights*.

In Cambodia, the king known to history as Jayavarman II held a ceremony on the Hill of Lychees (Phnom Kulen) in Cambodia, declared independence from Java, and established a kingdom which endured for 600 years on the north shore of the Tonle Sap. The true Angkor period did not begin until the start of the Middle Classic period, but the Khmer began to develop the techniques and art styles which would enable them to build some of the world's most spectacular buildings in the next phase of Classic history.

In the central part of the mainland, a shadowy entity known as Dvaravati formed and developed an art style and a Buddhist culture. Whether it formed a unified kingdom, and if so, how big it may have been, are still mysterious.

## BRAHMINISM

Some scholars use the term “Brahminism” in preference to Hinduism. The word means “one who has realized or attempts to realize Brahman”, which is related to the English concept of “soul”. Jean Filliozat has shown that court priests in modern Thailand and Cambodia are descendants of individuals who arrived there from India sometime after the 16th century, bringing with them traditions of southeast India. They were successors to the *purohita*, or religious advisers, of earlier kings but were not Brahmins. Their status was probably like that of modern *gurukkal* of southwest India who are not members of the Brahmin caste either. Balinese culture assigns no special role to Brahmins in contrast to the situation in modern India.

Brahmanas are ritual experts, but are unlikely to have been agents of Sanskritization. Brahmanas have no major literary texts; much of their knowledge is orally transmitted. The fact that Sanskrit grammar was known in Indonesia, or that the inscriptions from Cambodia are in better Sanskrit than many in India, does not imply that Seasian ritual experts or Sanskrit authors must have been Brahmanas. Around 1000 BCE, the oldest Indian religious texts, the Vedas, were replaced by new texts, the Upanishads, which led to the formation of new schools of Indian thought such as Vedanta and Yoga. Vedic gods such as Indra, Varuna, and Agni were replaced with other deities such as Siva and Visnu. Some Vedic practices such as *homa*, or fire sacrifices, however, continued. Fifth-century inscriptions from Kutai, east Borneo, suggest that Vedic religion continued to survive and made some converts in Seasia.

Some texts in India such as the *Manusmṛti* completely forbid Brahmanas from going overseas. Baudhāyana places it first among *pataniya*, or offences, which lead to the loss of one’s caste,<sup>29</sup> but in some cases penances could be undertaken to expiate this impurity. There are a few specific references to Brahmanas from India in Seasia in the Classic period. Four are mentioned in Cambodian inscriptions from the time of Jayavarman II to Jayavarman VII. Jayavarman VIII married the daughter of one of them. Two Brahmanas married Khmer princesses. In eighth-century Java, a Brahmana from Gaudidvipa is cited in the Kelurak inscription.<sup>30</sup>

The Early Classic was a golden age of Seasian cultural development. In the Sanskrit cosmopolis, Seasian thinkers, artists, and rulers created achievements worthy of comparison with any of their more populous neighbors to the north.

## RULERSHIP IN SEASIA

Elements of prehistoric rulership can be traced through the use of Indic language and symbols to portray it. Several different theoretical constructs have been used to analyze early political systems in Classic Seasia. This is an important topic because it is not only relevant to the reconstruction of Seasian cultural

history but also it relates directly to the question of “Indianization”. Two main paradigms are used by scholars who study Classic Seasia. The most popular is that which places great emphasis on the formation of states.

## STATE FORMATION

As formulated by political scientists, the state level of organization is identified by the fact that the legitimate use of force is reserved for designated representatives of society. Archaeologists and historians have used the term in a much broader sense, assuming that archaeologically observable attributes are correlated with the monopoly of force. Some scholars have argued that states existed in prehistoric times, but without written records it is impossible to verify the existence of a monopoly of legitimate force. No archaeologist has claimed the ability to detect this institution. Many scholars assume that states cannot exist without cities or economic mechanisms such as redistribution and long-distance trade. If evidence for these is found, it is concluded that the state level of organization has been achieved. This is clearly circular thinking.

Another problem connected with the use of the state model is that the transition from pre-state (usually termed “chiefdom”) to the state level of organization is assumed to have been a sudden event like the crossing of a threshold rather than a long-term process of gradual transformation in multiple subsystems of culture. As David Clarke so well explained the problem, cultures are composed of numerous subsystems which do not all change at once in response to the same variable. Different subsystems of culture (e.g., economy, religion, technology, political institutions) change at different rates and are sensitive to different variables.<sup>31</sup> Scholars who pay attention to this problem are usually confronted by the “blurry” nature of the boundary between states and the preliminary stage, the chiefdom. “Too often, one archaeologist’s state is another’s complex chiefdom.”<sup>32</sup>

A related difficulty is the need to specify an evolutionary process by which the transition from chiefdom and state could occur. Chiefdoms seem to be “the natural end of social evolution” and “the natural culmination of the agricultural revolution”. Webb concluded that the transition could only occur when chiefs control trade during a period of warfare, an explanation which seems satisfactory.<sup>33</sup> Left open is the question of how states, once formed, can be identified purely by reference to artifacts and their distribution.

The notion of the state has often been invoked in Seasia. One study found “strong archaeological and historic grounds for concluding that the hierarchical settlement pattern in the Mun and Chi valleys reflects state formation”.<sup>34</sup> The criterion for detecting a state in this case is a simple one: a two-tier settlement hierarchy. Wilen<sup>35</sup> shared the opinion that the Mun and Chi valleys experienced state formation in the Protoclassic period but disagreed with the method used to reach it. He found two major faults: a two-tier rather than three-tier settlement pattern for the state (although he suggests that a different analytical technique might disclose the existence of a three-tier pattern in northeast Thailand) and the “uncritical” application of Renfrew’s Early State Module, which takes no account of absolute site sizes.<sup>36</sup> Chantaratyakarn revised the conclusions of the earlier report, to equate the two-tier hierarchy with a chiefdom,



although he acknowledged that a three-tier hierarchy might have existed if Muang Fa Daed and Ban Chiang Hian were part of a single system rather than two separate systems.<sup>37</sup>

The problem with using settlement patterns as a criterion for state formation is that it is necessary to assume that settlement patterns are correlated with political organization. There is no proof that this assumption is true, or how often this correlation exists. Settlement patterning is a response to a different set of variables than control of legitimate force. It is best to deal with the evolution of settlement pattern hierarchies as one dimension in the evolution of cultural complexity, and political evolution as another dimension.

Some authors equate the Seasian state with the institution of “kingship” (also undefined).<sup>38</sup> Examination of this institution in Europe has shown that “The obvious temptation to assume that the title ‘monarchy’ implied the emergence of some embryonic state should be resisted.”<sup>39</sup> There is also the major hurdle posed by any attempt to equate Seasian titles with the English title “king” without taking into account the need to reconstruct the powers which accompanied such a title, and the likelihood that these powers varied significantly from time to time within the same society.

Bennet Bronson is one of the few archaeologists who has attempted to provide “an overview of . . . the rise of the South East Asian state”.<sup>40</sup> He emphasizes the role of trade in state formation (although it is not clear whether as a cause or an effect). Bronson designated Dvaravati as the first state in central Thailand which can be detected by archaeological means. According to his analysis, Angkor in the eleventh century represented “the fully-developed pattern of the autocratic, highly centralized, religiously-butressed South East Asian state”. On *a priori* grounds he assumed that the appearance of a state should be correlated with changes in modes of exchange and production; therefore he assumes that increase in “regional-level” economic integration is sufficient proof of state formation.

Bronson gave no grounds to justify these assertions and explicitly omitted discussion of “several critically important aspects of what goes into ordinary definitions of the state”, including governmental institutions. He acknowledged that many Seasian examples of state formation do not fulfill the criterion of an integrated regional economy, but asserted that the assumption that this condition existed in central Thailand in the first millennium CE is “quite safe”. He rejects two common prime movers frequently associated with state formation (i.e., control of conflict amid increasing population; commerce stimulated by environmental variability) for Thailand. His evidence for long-distance trade in Dvaravati consisted of “two Chinese artifacts, one possibly Burmese artifact, several objects which might be from Oc-èo, and no fewer than eight metallic blackware bowls, at least two of which are close enough in paste to the Hambantota examples to have come from Ceylon”.<sup>41</sup> This seems inadequate evidence for a volume of long-distance trade capable of causing cultural change of the fundamental nature implied by state formation. Had Bronson avoided the use of the stadial concept of “state” and been content to utilize the processual concept that even these few imported objects are evidence for “increasing socioeconomic complexity”, this criticism would not apply.

Like other stadial models, the political model portrays the state as the culmination of a teleological process of evolution. A better paradigm for the study of culture complexity must provide for polythetic definitions of classes of phenomena and multi-linear sequences of change. The best course, as another archaeologist advocated, is to “specify those measurable attributes of what we call a ‘Chieftdom’ or

‘State’, and then proceed to explain changes in each of these attributes separately. . . . The entities and processes involved in these things are certainly in many cases independent of one another, and can be accounted for separately.”<sup>42</sup> Even “political scientists themselves now tend to avoid the word [state] because of its ambiguities and prefer to deal with more specific institutions and political/administrative functions”.<sup>43</sup>

The paradigm of state formation is also popular in Indian historiography. In fact, “The process of state formation in this period [1000–1700] is one of the most controversial subjects in Indian historiography.”<sup>44</sup> Five models compete with one another in India. One is the Marxist idea of the Asiatic mode of production, in which the state has great powers of coercion. The second model, the “unitary territorial kingdom”, assumes that early Indian treatises like the *Arthashastra* and late medieval Arab and Persian chronicles are literal descriptions of a golden age which was brought to an end by foreign conquests. The third is the idea of a “lightly bureaucratized” empire which depended on ability of individual rulers to hold the state together, in which revenue from taxing trade provided an important source of centralized power.

The fourth model defines the Gupta Empire (third to sixth centuries) as a highly efficient state which descended into a dark age of feudalism as the result of the loss of revenue to localities. Historians Marc Bloch and Max Weber argued that the term “feudalism” could be applied to areas outside Europe. In the 1950s, Indian historians such as D.D. Kosambi and R.S. Sharma argued that grants of land to Brahmins, religious institutions, and government officials, and relief from taxation resulted in the formation of aristocracy who turned villagers into serfs. Some of the concomitants of feudalism as in Europe were the decline of cities and international trade, indicated by the scarcity of coinage. Another form of evidence was the gradual transformation of the meaning of the word *sāmanta*, which originally meant “king”, after 600 CE to “vassal” or “tributary chief”.<sup>45</sup>

The fifth model is the segmentary state.<sup>46</sup> Each segment (“nuclear area” or local center; analogous to the term “subregion” in this book) has the same ritual and administrative structure as the principal center or capital. “Ritual hegemony” or “ritual sovereignty” sets the capital segment apart from the rest of the units which make up the state. All segments in the state maintained courts, officials, and rituals which mirrored one another. The principal exponent of this model, Burton Stein, used the Chola state of south India as his main case study. This is quite relevant to Seasia, since the Cholas in the early eleventh century made the only known military foray into Seasia, and although their hegemony only lasted for a century, they left behind a profound impact in history. Stein described the Chola state as having three zones: a central area in which the ruler exercised direct control over day-to-day administration; an intermediate zone in which political control was exercised more and more sporadically and superficially; and a peripheral zone where the center only enjoyed ritual sovereignty. In the Chola Empire, “Inscriptions had the primary function of distributing the standardized message of great kingship to all places of the realm.” They were evidence of ritual sovereignty, not political control. Stein emphasized the royal Siva cult as the ideology which cemented the segments together.<sup>47</sup>

It is easy to see many elements in common between each of these theories of Indian state formation and particular aspects of Seasian polities. Plausible arguments could be made in favour of applying the last three models to Seasia.

## THE MANDALA MODEL

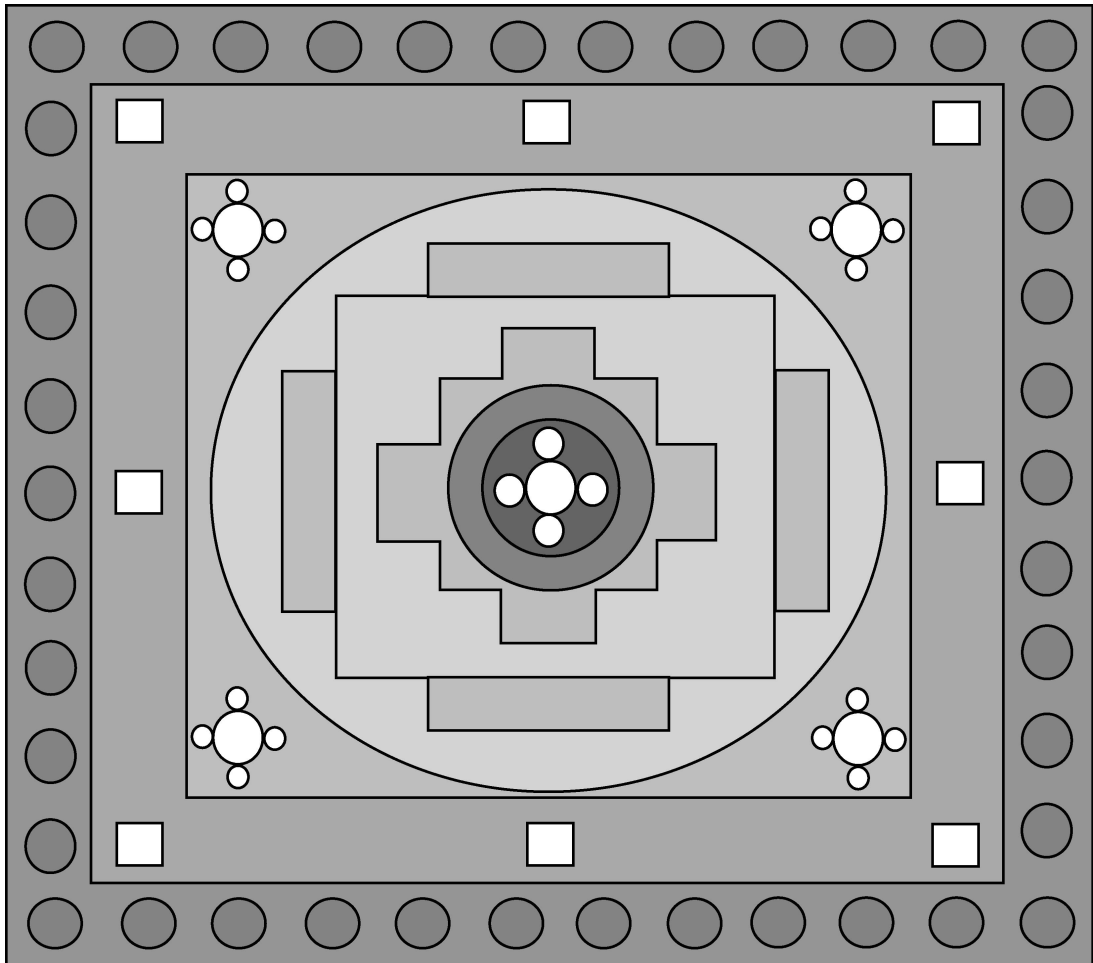
There is no easy way to choose between the “lightly bureaucratized” model, the feudal model, and the segmentary state for India. Given the attraction of utilizing parts of all three of these models to describe Classic Seasian polities, why should one look any further? There are three reasons for doing so. First, there is much less information available for Seasia than for India, whereas Seasia is larger and more ecologically varied than India. One would imagine that different models would apply to different regions and different periods in India; the same is true for Seasia.

Second is the lack of philosophical clarity of the state model in general. The third reason is that all of these models are abstractions imposed from an external point of view; they may not correspond to any indigenous concepts which Seasians would have recognized or considered relevant to their situation. There is a Sanskrit word which was used both in India and Seasia to denote institutionalized power relationships: *mandala* (Figure 5.1).

The word *mandala*, literally “circle” in Sanskrit,<sup>48</sup> appears in many contexts. It was used to refer to the 10 divisions of the *R Veda* of ancient Hinduism. In later Indian and Seasian sources, the word was used to refer to ideal and real polities. The word appears in Early Classic inscriptions. The Wat Cakret inscription from the Ba Phnom region of Funan (K. 60, 626 CE) includes the phrase *rājendrasya prasādena diṁmaṇḍalavicār(iṇaḥ)*, which Barth translated as “le cercle (entier) des régions”.<sup>49</sup> Middle Classic Angkorian inscriptions praised Rajendravarman’s *mandala* as “rich and without faction” along with the seven constituents (*prakṛti*) of which the kingdom (*rajya*) was composed according to Indian political theory.

In Indonesia, Srivijaya referred to itself in its inscriptions as a *mandala*. The seventh-century Sabukingking inscription mentions *kāmu maṁrakṣāṇa sakalamāṇḍalaṇa kadātuanku*, “you who protect the entire *mandala* of my kingdom”.<sup>50</sup> The expression *sakalayavadvīpa (maṇḍala)*, “the entire *mandala* of the island of Java”, recurs in east Javanese inscriptions. For example, the Tuhanaru inscription (1315 CE) implores the protection of *kita prasiddha rumakṣaṇ yavadvīpamaṇḍala*, “you celebrated ones who protect the orbit of Yavadvīpa”.<sup>51</sup> Although definitions/paraphrases/glosses/translations of “*mandala*” in English have much in common with the term “segmentary state”,<sup>52</sup> *mandala* is preferable for several reasons. It has none of the problematic implications of the term “state”. The *mandala* concept is not a substitute for or alternative to the idea of the state; it refers to a system of relations among competing rulers, and between rulers and their subjects, who in sparsely populated Seasia usually had the choice of remaining under one ruler or moving elsewhere, including the ability to choose between areas with different levels of taxation and administrative oversight.

The term “*mandala*” connotes a specific relationship between competing rulers in a region where a number of subregions are more or less equally powerful (“heterarchy” or “peer polities”). In Classic Seasia and India, ambitious rulers strove to compel others who were on approximately the same level (segments in the segmentary state model) to pay tribute, often couched in terms of recognition of the central ruler’s spiritual superiority. In the period of the Maurya “empire” which coincided with the late Preclassic in Seasia, “the successful king is not the one who wipes out all the others in the *mandala*. He is the one who gets them to acknowledge him as the overlord and give him tribute”.<sup>53</sup> Within their



**Figure 5.1** Schematic mandala

home territories, however, the chiefs of the subregions were free to act more or less autonomously. This autonomy extended to the collection of taxes and adjudication of legal disputes. One of the main concerns of the supreme leader of the mandala was to reserve for himself the right to deal with other rulers outside the mandala. Chinese and Indian kingdoms employed much the same ideology. During much of Chinese history, when Confucian philosophy was dominant, trade was viewed as a demeaning occupation. Exchanges between the Chinese emperors and foreign envoys took place, but they were couched in terms of presentation of tribute from rulers autonomous in their own realms to the morally superior Son of Heaven, on the same principles as the central figures or rulers in mandalas in Sumatra or the Malay Peninsula used to extract desired commodities from the leaders on the next level of the hierarchy.<sup>54</sup>

In the mandala system, neighbouring regimes were potential rivals for supreme moral authority.<sup>55</sup> A ruler with ambitions to become *cakravartin*, supreme rulers of mandalas, did not set out to destroy his

rivals but to exert just enough force to compel them to acknowledge his spiritual supremacy. The mandala model thus gives primacy to ritual and ceremonial rather than administrative control over subordinate areas, which were assumed to possess permanent identities of their own. Chutintaranond<sup>56</sup> glossed mandalas as “continuous networks of loyalties between the rulers and the ruled”. Indian inscriptions refer to the circle of vassals (*sāmanta-maṇḍala*) of an overlord (*rājādhirāja*).<sup>57</sup>

The relationship between the supreme ruler and subordinate rulers was perceived in terms of sacred diagrams in which the supreme deity occupies the center of a series of concentric circles occupied by satellite deities, the whole usually (but not always) bounded by a square. Religious mandalas, which in India were usually drawn on two-dimensional surfaces such as canvas or even with colored sand, depicted the main deity at the center of the constellation of subordinate deities, who have their own satellites, and so on ad infinitum. Other associated deities are shown at the four cardinal points around the central deity. Thus mandalas are associated with multiples of the number 4 + 1: 5, 17, 33, etc. Ancient Seasian kingdoms replicated this system in their court structures, for example, by appointing 33 ministers.

The mandala as both a metaphor and an analytical tool for the study of early Seasian thought was first brought into focus by S.J. Tambiah. He noted that the concept served as an organizing principle at many levels, from the cosmos with Mount Meru at the center, surrounded by four secondary peaks, oceans, and mountain ranges, to a geopolitical concept in the *Arthasastra*, to the human body, and to sacred designs made with colored powder. He showed how the Mataram and Majapahit kingdoms of Java, the districts of the state of Negri Sembilan in peninsular Malaysia, the polity of Ayutthaya, the layout of temples such as Borobudur and Angkor Wat, and much else in Seasia are mandalas.<sup>58</sup>

O.W. Wolters was one of the most influential exponents of the use of the mandala for analysis of Seasian polities.<sup>59</sup> His phrase “man of prowess” has become a common label for one of the main qualities which he thought was essential for a would-be head of a mandala. In addition to charisma, other qualities which the leader of a mandala had to display were asceticism, access to wealth, and generosity in sharing it. In nineteenth-century Malaya, the houses of rulers were often indistinguishable from those of their subjects because they had to redistribute so much of their income. Inscriptions often list largesse given away by rulers on certain occasions. The *Vessantara Jataka* story of the future Buddha as a king who gave away everything, including his wife and children, is one of the most popular themes in Classic Buddhist art. At the ninth century Buddhist temple of Borobudur, the *Avadana* story of the king who gave away money and gold rings and caused rich textiles to fall from the sky is depicted in detail. The Malay chronicle of Pasai records a council meeting at which it is decided to choose a particular person as king because he is wealthy. In Early Classic Java, rulers sponsored frequent feasts as another means of displaying and sharing their wealth.<sup>60</sup> Such rituals are still carried out at the royal courts of Yogyakarta and Surakarta three times a year.

## TITLES

Seasian rulers sometimes assumed the title *rājādhirāja*, “king of kings”, or even *maharajadhiraja*. Other Sanskritic terms employed included *cakravartin*, “wheel turner”, figuratively meaning “universal

monarch”, and *Dharmaraja*, “king of the law” or “righteous king”. A king of Lan Na in the fifteenth century was called both *Dharmaraja* and *cakravartin*. A *cakravartin* was supposed to exude qualities such as heroism, valor, prowess, splendor, and the ability to discern the best course for himself and others, and to inspire awe and devotion in all mankind. In Early Classic Cambodia, leaders with the title *pon* gained power by digging wells and ponds.<sup>61</sup> Probably potential chiefs demonstrated their leadership ability by organizing such construction projects. They needed access to resources to achieve this; providing food for those who worked on the reservoirs could have been one way to attract people to collaborate with him.

Sanskrit manuals of government do not contain notions of the state, constitutional legitimacy, or territorial jurisdiction circumscribed by precise borders. They emphasize the qualities of the righteous ruler. Those who do not acknowledge the righteous ruler are evil and can be destroyed. The most famous example of a Seasian who portrayed himself overtly as a *cakravartin* is Jayavarman II of Cambodia, who underwent a ceremony in 802 specifically intended to elevate him to that status. The figure of Anawrahta in eleventh-century Bagan is another ruler whom later generations specifically cited as a *cakravartin*.<sup>62</sup>

The *Dharmaraja* rules in accord with and protects the dharma, Buddha’s law, and the sangha, or monastic community. In Sanskrit culture, *dharma* refers to a Vedic concept which variously means duty, the right way of living, and religious law. *Dharmarajas* must embody 10 kingly virtues, five common precepts, and eight further precepts on holy days. They must ensure that monks adhere to monastic regulations. In Myanmar, kings periodically purified the monastic order of heterodox ideas. King Rajakumara referred to his father Kyanzittha as a *Dharmaraja* in the Myazedi inscription of 1112 CE. Yama (the Lord of Death) and his son Yudhisthira in the *Mahabharata* epic are called *dharmaraja*. Yama enforces the principles of religion by punishing all violators. Yudhisthira is known for his steadfastness in performing his duties.

In addition to adopting Sanskrit titles, Seasian rulers incorporated Sanskrit into their personal names. Terms with the general meaning “lord” were used, such as Narendra, incorporating the name (*Indra*, from the “king of the gods” who ruled Mount Meru in both Hindu and Buddhist thought. In Cambodia, many rulers used the suffix – *varmadeva*. Early historians mistakenly transliterated the suffix as – *varman*; thus Jayavarman should properly be written Jayavarmadeva. However, it has not been thought worthwhile to confuse the issue by renaming all the ancient Khmer kings.

Seasian rulers also employed indigenous vocabulary in their titles. In Angkor, rulers’ titles were based on the root *mratañ*, including *Vrah kamrateñ añ*, “His Majesty”. The term was first used for gods, but a process of “title inflation” began around 650, when men claiming kingship began to use it for themselves. Seasian historians face major problems in interpreting names found in ancient inscriptions because rulers had different names at different stages of life: a personal name before becoming king, a royal title during their reign, and a posthumous name.

In Java, the first component of the ruler’s appellation was usually Sri Maharaja (“glorious great king”). Next came the name of their *watak*, that is, the appanage from which they drew their main income. The title of a noble who ruled a *watak* was *rakryān i* (“appanage-holder in. . .”), which was often abbreviated *raka i* or *rake*. This was sometimes followed by an honorific such as *dyah* (“His Majesty”), *pu* or *mpu*, roughly “the learned one”, or *sri* (“the glorious one”). Some rulers were initiated into



religious orders, after which they received a religious name. Different inscriptions might use different parts of these long names. An example of a complete royal Javanese name and title found in an inscription is Sri Maharaja Raka i Watukura Dyah Balitung Sri Dharmmodaya Mahasambu.

## RULES OF SUCCESSION

One of the more interesting aspects of the Seasian system of government was that there was no rule of primogeniture, that is, no assumption that the king's eldest son would succeed his father. Genealogical connections with a previous king were important, but the group of people who could claim such descent could be quite large. Kings had numerous wives and concubines. Aspirants to the throne could stake claims through their mothers. It was through this mechanism that Wolters' "men of prowess" could hope to rise to the summit of a mandala. Their achievements would have been relevant in a situation where succession was not preordained by custom. There are numerous references to councils of nobles and influential people who convened upon the death of a king. The composition of these "houses of lords" or privy councils varied from place to place and time to time.

Kings commonly abdicated the throne before their death in order to give their favourite son time to develop his own patron-client links and practice leadership skills. In 607 CE, in the Red Earth Land (*Chi-tu*; the Kelantan-Patani area), the ruler's father transferred the throne to his son "to preach Buddhism".<sup>63</sup> Rulers often invoked religious duty as a motivation for abdication. There is archaeological evidence for this practice. Hoards of gold religious paraphernalia have been discovered at two ninth-century sites in central Java which may have been the places where kings retreated after their retirement (Wonoboyo and Seplawan). Some *Jatakas* (stories of Buddha's previous incarnations) depict the positive karma which accrues to kings who retire to lives of prayer and meditation.<sup>64</sup> In these stories, a king finds a gray hair which reminds him that life is brief. The king abdicates to become a hermit; as a result, he is reborn in Brahma's heaven in the next life.

In traditional Javanese shadow puppet plays (*wayang kulit*), a cliché says *lengser keprabon, madeg pandito* ("step down as king, become priest"). In the *Mahabharata*, the Indian epic which forms the basis for the shadow play, King Abiyasa failed to achieve this goal because he favoured certain children, leading his grandchildren to fight a destructive war for power, the *Bhratayudha*.<sup>65</sup> Early European descriptions of Seasia refer to "old kings" and "young kings" in the same kingdom. Sometimes old kings would come out of retirement. In 1400 Bhra Hyang Wishesa, the successor of the great king Hayam Wuruk in the east Javanese kingdom of Majapahit, became a hermit, but in 1404 he became embroiled in a civil war with a rival.<sup>66</sup> In 1680s Banten, west Java, the "retired" sultan went to war against his own son.

This tradition was not limited to the insular region. A fifteenth-century Chinese source<sup>67</sup> records that in Annam, "When the king has reigned thirty years he becomes a hermit for the purpose of fasting and penance, and he commands his son or his nephew to be regent of the kingdom." In Cambodia, the practice of abdicating in favour of a son is only recorded in the last three reigns before the end of inscriptions. This practice is also recorded at the same time in the Tran dynasty of Vietnam.

## THE DEVARAJA

One theory which has been advanced to explain the depth and breadth of Indian influence in early Seasia is derived from the belief that Seasian rulers chose to espouse Brahminical or Buddhist religions as a result of the idea of *devaraja* (“god-king” in Sanskrit). This belief has been debunked numerous times but continues to persist in literature. In one of the more extensive refutations of this notion,<sup>68</sup> Paul Wheatley noted that In Cambodia and Java, subregions for which we possess the most extensive contemporary written sources, kings never explicitly claimed to be Siva or Visnu or Buddha. Their claims were more subtle: They claimed to be a “detached portion” of a deity. In Cambodia, kings gave names to statues or linggas which implied that the deity of whom the king claimed to possess a portion of his essence was present and contactable in those icons.

The symbolism of Seasian Classic temples has been debated for more than a century. In the twentieth century it was commonly believed that the ashes of a king were interred beneath the main image in a temple, and thus received worship when the statue or lingga was worshipped. The idea of temples as mausolea was partly instigated by early archaeological investigators who were struck by the discoveries of stone, metal, or ceramic containers in which ashes were found together with objects of precious metal and glass. It was concluded that the containers were reliquaries.

The lack of textual or archaeological justification for this idea was forcefully exposed by Seasian scholars such as R. Soekmono, first Indonesian director of the Indonesian archaeological service.<sup>69</sup> A recent study of an Indian text exposed the literary basis for these containers, which are now known to have been consecration deposits.<sup>70</sup> These were made to hold various materials which had to be implanted in various parts of the temples during their construction. Many more of these deposits have been recovered in Seasia than in India. This is one of many examples of instances in which Seasians took ritually prescribed actions more seriously than did Indians themselves. They have nothing to do with funerals; the ashes are mainly remains of plants.

When kings died, they were perceived as rejoining the deity from whom they had become momentarily detached to sojourn for a spell on earth. Such incarnations are more often associated with Visnu and Buddha than with Siva, but offerings to Siva are nonetheless strongly advocated in Hindu texts. A fourteenth-century East Javanese poem, the *Desavarnana*, provides a lengthy description of a *sraddha* ceremony which took place 12 years after the ruler (in this case, a queen) died. It was believed that the detached portion of the deity hovered near the earth for that length of time, after which it returned to the greater unity from which it originated. The personality of the dead person then vanished. The *sraddha* was held to celebrate this ascent to heaven. Similar beliefs are thought to have already existed in Seasia during the Preclassic period. They are not found in India. Similar ideas, however, are found in various parts of Seasia today, though they are gradually disappearing.

The concept of the “stranger king” has been noted earlier (see “Kings, gods, and gods of kings (*devaraja*)”, Chapter 4).<sup>71</sup> Analogous phenomena have been detected in north Sulawesi<sup>72</sup> and in other parts of Asia. In the Postclassic, Europeans learned that the foreign king trope made it easy for them to obtain power quickly in parts of Asia.

## PATRON-CLIENT TIES

In some parts of Seasia, ancient social institutions in which certain groups continue to maintain traditional patron-client relations still exist. The implications of these relations usually involve the provision of services by clients in exchange for protection by patrons. In Java, such a relationship is sometimes called *kawula-gusti*, literally “servant-master”. In ancient times, clients were bonded to patrons in various ways. Historical sources in Seasia are sometimes interpreted as reporting the existence of some form of involuntary servitude, but there exists a wide range of possible ties between patrons and clients which were all expressed by the same word. In ancient Cambodia, clients could be mortgaged, sold, or rented. On the other hand, these clients had their own clients and could control land and property. Cambodian slaves could be freed, have families, hold titles and offices such as village chief, and be official witnesses. Their status was generally higher than in ancient India, where slaves could not make contracts or witness ceremonies, nor did they have families.

Ninth-century inscriptions from Roluos mention 40,000 clients, grouped according to place of origin and function. The Preah Khan inscription of Jayavarman VII in the late thirteenth century mentions the donation of 306,372 clients and 13,500 villages to various foundations. When Zhou Daguan visited Angkor from 1295 to 1296, he only mentioned a few people whom he termed domestic slaves.

It is difficult to form a precise idea of the rights and obligations of those termed slaves in the inscriptions. The word *knum* in Khmer sometimes corresponded to Sanskrit *dasa*, “slave”, but sometimes to *bhrtya*, “servant”, occasionally used in a figurative sense. Thus inscriptions only give a vague idea of ancient social relations; ambiguities remain, which result from the practice of using the same word literally at some times, figuratively at others. The word *knum* may have denoted “dependent” or “client” rather than slave, just as the word *budak* in Indonesian means child, but in Malay, slave. In Classic Malay, a subject would address his ruler as *hamba Tuan*, literally meaning “your slave”, but probably closer in meaning to “your servant”. People whom early Europeans called slaves could actually have been termed debtors, dependents, or subjects.<sup>73</sup> Thus a wide range of relationships may have existed, but cannot be distinguished from the meager literary evidence which survives.

In the fourteenth-century kingdom of Lan Na, *The Judgments of King Mangrai* described freemen as rare. Rulers in nineteenth-century Seasia could still compel their subjects to perform corvée labour without compensation. Those made temple slaves were in some sense better off, because they were not subject to corvée. In Sumatra in the late sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, as well as the uplands of Myanmar in recent times, many people voluntarily became serfs, because it guaranteed them a livelihood. Claims on the labour of others were valuable possessions in Postclassic Seasia. In Melaka in 1537 people said “that [it] is better to have slaves than to have land”. Among the elite of Banten in 1606 according to an English visitor, “Their wealth lyeth altogether in slaves.”<sup>74</sup> One can imagine multiple levels of patron-client ties, in which some people were slaves in the modern sense of someone who has no rights over his or her own body, while others could demand labour in certain circumstances from some people, but had to render services to others. At the very top of the pyramid was the person who owed service to no other.

## EARLY CLASSIC CULTURE IN THE CHAO PHRAYA BASIN AND THE KHORAT PLATEAU

Many sites in central and northeast Thailand have yielded remains of occupation over many centuries, from the Preclassic to the Late Classic. Previous generations of scholars were wedded to the notion that Early Classic Seasia was home to a number of “states” much like those of early modern Europe. This assumption has been discredited since the 1980s by Seasians who have looked at the data from fresh perspectives. Sophisticated networks of communication, trade, and artistic experimentation existed by the Preclassic. During the Early Classic, new forms of art and architecture appeared at these centers in tandem with similar developments in India. The Chao Phraya basin and Khorat Plateau subregions underwent related but different patterns of development in which Cambodia was also involved. No state-like political organizations can be discerned; spheres of interaction formed, consisting of a heterarchy of mandalas which were engaged in a continuous dialogue which did not require political unity to exist. Common aesthetic values covered broader areas than political units did in early Seasia. The idiotechnic subsystem of culture was more stable, and thus, one could argue, more significant than the sociotechnic subsystem.<sup>75</sup>

### DVARAVATI

Of all the cultural entities which existed in Early Classic Seasia, Dvaravati is one of the most evanescent. The name means “Possessing Gates” in Sanskrit. Dvaravati is one of the most famous kingdoms in Indian mythology; its king was Visnu in his incarnation as Krisna. The formal name of a Thai kingdom founded in 1351 was Dvaravati Sri Ayutthaya (normally referred to simply as Ayutthaya). The name occurs in two inscriptions in Cambodia dated 952 and 1002.<sup>76</sup> In the *Apadana*, Dvaravati is the city of the past Buddha, Siddhattha. In the *Gandavyuha*, which plays a major role on the ninth-century temple Borobudur, the hero of the story, Sudhana goes to meet Mahadeva (Siva) at Dvaravati.

More than 40 known Early Classic sites are found between Ku Bua at the north end of the Siam-Malay Peninsula and Nakhon Sawan in central Thailand.<sup>77</sup> Important archaeological sites in the lower Chao Phraya include U Thong Phra Pathom, and Nakhon Pathom. Khu Bua and Phong Tuek lie along a route to the west via the Three Pagodas Pass. Si Thep in the Pa Sak River valley is on the route to north Thailand. Dong Si Maha Pho is on the way east to Cambodia, Laos, and the Khorat Plateau.

The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuan Zhang (596–664) mentioned a kingdom called Dvaravati between Isanapura in Cambodia and Sri Ksetra in Myanmar. Dvaravati sent three missions to China, all during his lifetime (in 638, 640, and 649). Yijing also mentioned it in the late seventh century. These are the only Chinese references to the kingdom. No Chinese seem to have visited it.

In the early twentieth century it was assumed that Dvaravati inhabited by Mon speakers ruled a large part of central Thailand and perhaps the Khorat Plateau. No data which would confirm that assumption has been found. Some Dvaravati-style artifacts, including stone sculptures of the “wheel of the law”, or *dharmacakra*, are found in the southern portion of the Siam-Malay Peninsula between Chaiya and Yala. However, only one inscription tentatively ascribed to the Mon in the isthmian region predates the thirteenth century. Most scholars now agree that a polity called Dvaravati may only have existed for a

few years. Its geographical extent will probably never be known. It may have been one site rather than an extended area. As a name for an art style and a mandala or set of peer polities, however, the name Dvaravati is still used, though rather hesitantly, to refer to a group of sites in central Thailand with radio-carbon dates of the sixth to ninth centuries which yield similar artifacts, including types of earthenware pottery, iron tools, beads, Buddhist and Brahmanical sculpture, and brick monuments. The Dvaravati archaeological complex declined in the ninth and tenth centuries, while Angkor began expanding. Probably the culture of the region changed as a result.

## INSCRIPTIONS

In the Dvaravati archaeological horizon, inscriptions in four different languages have been found: Pali, Sanskrit, Old Mon, and Old Khmer. Pali inscriptions from Dvaravati are “citation” or “quotation inscriptions” written on ceremonial objects to create merit and protect donors, worshippers, and the places where they were kept. Spokes of stone wheels of the law have Pali inscriptions quoting from the *Vinaya Pitaka*, *Mahavagga*, and *Dhammapada*. Some are connected with the Four Noble Truths which Buddha taught when he set the wheel in motion.<sup>78</sup> Sanskrit was used by the elite. The base of a statue found at Nakhon Ratchasima is inscribed *dvarapati*, “lord of Dvaravati” in Sanskrit.<sup>79</sup> A Sanskrit inscription from Wat Chantuk, Nakhon Ratchasima, on a sandstone base for a Buddha statue says “daughter of the lord of Dvaravati . . . the queen set up the image . . . this of the Tathagata”.<sup>80</sup>

Old Mon inscriptions are found as far east as Vientiane. They were used by commoners for such purposes as recording donations to monasteries. An Old Mon inscription from Narai Cave near Lopburi is one of the oldest known Mon texts, dated palaeographically to the sixth century. It contains a reference to Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka.<sup>81</sup>

Lists of offerings were sometimes written in Old Khmer (to which Old Mon is closely related). Khmer influence is apparent in royal titles, and in the decoration on some of the wheels of the law. On the other hand, some decorative motifs may have evolved in Dvaravati and then spread to Cambodia; thus communication travelled in both directions.<sup>82</sup> Mon or Mon-Khmer inscriptions of the Early Classic are mainly found in Khorat, though some are found as far west as Nakhon Pathom. Pali is most common in central Thailand, while Sanskrit is concentrated in the hills between central and northeast Thailand. There are, however, exceptions: one Sanskrit/Mon inscription is found at Ratchburi in the far southwest, and one at Nakhon Pathom (along with five in Pali); three more Pali-Mon inscriptions are found at Nakhon Sawan. Pali/Khmer mixtures are only found east of Prachinburi halfway between modern Bangkok and Cambodia.<sup>83</sup>

## ART OF DVARAVATI

Instead of Mahayana and Hinayana, Peter Skilling suggests that we use the terms *Sravakayana* and *Bodhisattvayana* to differentiate between believers according to the goal of their religious activities. *Sravakas* want to become *arhats*; the others want to become Buddhas. They are options, not institutions.

The widespread use of Pali in the region suggests that a Theravadin ordination lineage was more common in Dvaravati, but some monks worshipped Avalokitesvara.<sup>84</sup>

In Thamorat Cave, northeast Thailand, statues of four-armed bodhisattvas coexist with standing Buddhas in Dvaravati style. This is one of many indications that the terms Theravada and Mahayana, often used to describe two “sects” of Buddhism, are in fact two poles of a continuum of belief in which most believers fell somewhere in the middle. Most bodhisattvas (enlightening beings) in Dvaravati sites have no distinctive attributes, a trait shared with the Buddhist art of Myanmar. This suggests that they played relatively minor roles.

Dvaravati culture is normally associated with a *śrāvaka* form of Buddhism, but at Si Thep, Dong Si Maha Phot, Phetburi, and the Kra Isthmus, Buddhist art in the form of *dharmacakras* coexisted with Visnus in the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>85</sup> Some Dvaravati Buddhas have standard *mudras* (hand positions), others are in *katahastā* mudra (fingers folded down into palms as if holding an object). Dupont argued that the distinctive style of these statues evolved in the peninsula before 800 CE. Robert Brown noted similarities with statuary from Angkor Borei, which may be older, and demonstrated the strong influence of Khmer art on the Dvaravati interaction sphere.

Dvaravati art also included stucco and terracotta. The similarity of motifs found on stone sculptures called *dharmacakra* (“Wheel of the Law”) to early Cambodian art suggests a cultural relationship between these two areas. Some terracottas common in Dvaravati art are rare or absent elsewhere, including Buddha between two stupas. Only one Indian example is known. The motif was, however, very popular in Myanmar at the same period (seventh to ninth centuries).

A terracotta motif found only in Dvaravati’s cultural zone consists of Buddha flanked by stupa and cakra, mainly on votive tablets. This was a popular artifact in south Thailand but is also found in central Thailand (at Khu Bua). Reliefs depicting Buddha flanked by cakra and stupa are apparently unknown in India. These sculptures have other attributes such as garlands at the tops of pillars and three-dimensional stone deer which are not found in Indian tradition.

## DHARMAKAKRA/WHEEL OF THE LAW

“Turning the wheel of the law” symbolizes the beginning of the process by which Buddha’s wisdom was communicated to the rest of humankind. The *Lalitavistara* says that when preaching the first sermon, Buddha turned the wheel three times for each of the four Noble Truths, and created the *sangha*. The term is also applied to stone sculptures of a wheel placed on stone pillars. These are rare in India, but numerous examples are known in Thailand and Cambodia, most of which date from the Early Classic period.

The script used to write on some of the *dharmacakras* is datable to the era between the sixth and the ninth centuries. Robert Brown analyzed 42 stone wheels from the Dvaravati area and suggested that most of them were made during a brief period around 650 to 700, though some could have been made as late as the tenth century. The concentration of these objects at Nakhon Pathom suggests that this site played an important role in the religious life of Dvaravati.<sup>86</sup>



Brown identified one decorative pattern on the stone wheels as Khmer-influenced, one as connected with Funan, and one which might be termed Mon. Indorf<sup>87</sup> has elaborated on Brown's thesis, demonstrating that such stone wheels appeared before Dvaravati in a broader area from Oc-èo in the Mekong Delta to Yarang in south Thailand, and over a longer time span. She also suggests that the wheels can be compared with the discus of Visnu; both are termed *cakra* in Sanskrit. She calls attention to a Buddhist text, the *Dighanikaya*, which says that a Celestial Wheel appears when a just king has ruled for some time. When it does appear, the king should perform an *abhiśeka* ceremony for the wheel. Thus the wheels might have been symbols of royalty as well as Buddhism. She believes that the Oc-èo wheel may have been made between 500 and 600 CE. The reason why many are found around Nakhon Pathom may have been their use as royal palladia, like Siva linggas in Angkor. She also believes that the end of the tradition was probably due to Khmer expansion into the Dvaravati area.

## PHRAKHON CHAI HOARD

A large cache of bronze statues was found in Buriram Province, Thailand, in 1964. The exact number is not known, because the site was looted.<sup>88</sup> Rice chaff in the core material of a statue of Maitreya yielded a radiocarbon date of 330 to 650. According to unverifiable accounts, the largest statue was 1.6 meters high. The majority depict Maitreya and Avalokitesvara, though Buddhas are also included. Phrakhon Chai style has been characterized as linked to both Dvaravati and pre-Angkor Khmer-related sites, including Angkor Borei.

The images were found at Khao Plai Bat, 40 kilometers southwest of Phrakhon Chai city. A stone image of Buddha sheltered by the serpent Mucalinda found there is now in the National Museum Bangkok. Major large bronzes were found standing in a pit, wrapped in textiles, facing south toward Angkor. Possibly 200 smaller statues were found in the vicinity. The statues from Prasat Hin Khao Plai Bat II are all Buddhist, and date from a period of about 200 years (seventh to ninth centuries). Most are in a unique local style. They include esoteric deities (bodhisattvas). A few are in Dvaravati non-esoteric style. One depicts a bearded ascetic, a common Seasian motif probably connected with Preclassic ideals of meditation which can help a person gain supernatural power. The statues may have been connected with another shadowy mandala known from a few sources as Canasa.

## COINS AND MEDALS

There is no evidence that coins were made in Funan; only foreign coins have been found at Oc-èo. The "most extensive and varied coinage of ancient Southeast Asia" has been found in sites attributed to Dvaravati<sup>89</sup> (as accidental finds, not in archaeological excavations). Silver coins stamped with conch and *srivatsa* motifs similar to those found in the 1,500-kilometer-wide area from the lower Ayeyarwadi to Vietnam were made at U Thong and Nakhon Pathom and perhaps other sites as well. Rising

sun/*srivatsa* coins have been found in eight sites in Thailand, including Nakhon Pathom, U Thong, Lopburi, Singburi, and Chainat.

Lopburi (Lavapura), 120 kilometers north of Bangkok, was probably a major trading center around 700 CE; both locally made coins and a type known as *bhadrapiṭha-srivatsa* from Myanmar have been found there. One silver coin has the word *lavapura* (“Lava city/palace”) inscribed on it. Other inscriptions in Old Mon, Sanskrit, and Pali found there refer to donations to monasteries.

Lopburi was a center of Angkorian administration from 1000 to 1300 CE, but beneath a Khmer-period monument, Wat Nakhon Kosa, a stupa of Early Classic style with stucco and terracotta decoration was found in an excavation in 1983. Unfortunately, the site is now mainly covered by a modern city.<sup>90</sup>

A Chinese source claims that people in Dvaravati who made their own coins would have their hands cut off.<sup>91</sup> Besides silver, coins were made of lead or tin. The weight of these objects varies widely; they were used to buy and sell; they probably would have been weighed. They had no fixed face value.

At least seven silver coin-like medallions inscribed *Srīdvāravatīsvrapuṇya*, “the meritorious act of the lord of Dvaravati”, have been found.<sup>92</sup> Two were found buried in a jar near Nakhon Pathom in 1943 together with silver coins. Three others were found subsequently at U Thong with a cow and calf on the other side. One was found at Ban Khu Muang, 150 kilometers north of Nakhon Pathom, and another farther north at Chainat. Others are reported to exist, but their find spots are unverifiable. No coins in Classic Seasia ever bore the name of a king or kingdom.

After the Early Classic, no more coins were made in Dvaravati or elsewhere in Thailand until the fifteenth century. Thais preferred to use cowries as a medium of exchange. Sukhothai inscriptions depict the king as the religiously sanctified center of a large redistributive network.<sup>93</sup>

## DVARAVATI SITES

The two major sites associated with Dvaravati, Nakhon Pathom and U Thong, are located in the southwest part of the central plain of Thailand, between the Tha Chin and the Mae Khlong. Other significant sites, including Ku Bua and Phong Tuek, lie in the same area. Nakhon Pathom is the largest (559 hectares). The second tier of settlements between 300 and 470 hectares includes Si Thep and two others. In the third tier at 85 to 200 hectares are Ku Bua, Muang Phra Rot, Dong Si Mahasot, U Thong (96 hectares), Lopburi, and Bung Khok. Fourteen more are known in the range of 5 to 85 hectares.<sup>94</sup>

## Nakhon Pathom

Nakhon Pathom may have been the principal center of Dvaravati culture and politics. The site is strategically located at the confluence of the Mae Khlong and Khwae Noi Rivers. The Khwae Noi leads to the Three Pagodas Pass, for centuries a major communication route to Myanmar. The site of Sampango (Campanaga) in Myanmar, at the other end of the pass, has artifacts of the sixth to ninth centuries, including coins and beads comparable to Ku Bua, U Thong, and other sites in Kanchanaburi.<sup>95</sup>

The site is surrounded by a rectangular moat 3700 by 2000 meters. Dupont conducted excavations at Chedi Phra Thom, the “First Stupa”, 127 meters high. Though the earliest written references to a stupa here date from 675 CE, the first stage of the structure was probably built earlier. It appears to have been restored numerous times. A carved stone seal found here depicts a sailing ship with an outrigger, thus a Seasian vessel.<sup>96</sup> The significance of this area for maritime trade has been emphasized by the recent discovery of a ship from the Dvaravati period nearby. A habitation area yielded bronze ornaments and iron spear points of archaic type in an eighth/ninth–context.<sup>97</sup> A coin/medal from Nakhon Pathom is inscribed *Sri Sucaritavikranta*, but what it portends is unknown.<sup>98</sup>

## U Thong

The site of U Thong, literally “golden cradle”, is 70 kilometers inland from Nakhon Pathom, 100 kilometers northwest of Bangkok. The name was used for a *muang*, or district, in the mid-fourteenth century, when a man described as a chief or prince of U Thong, the son of a Chinese merchant according to one version of the *Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya* born in 1314, established a royal center on an island in the Chao Phraya which became the capital of Ayutthaya. It was surrounded by an oval moat and ramparts enclosing an area 1,690 by 840 meters inside which are remnants of brick monuments. Archaeological remains include plaster for coating temples, ceramics, iron tools, remnants of metal working such as slag, glass beads, and spindle whorls. The Thai-British Archaeological Expedition of 1966–70 excavated a location referred to as Tha Muang. Radiocarbon dates for the site extended from the period 600 BCE to 600 CE.<sup>99</sup> The site shares many details with Oc-èo such as beads of stone and glass, ear ornaments of lead and tin, and seals and amulets of carved stone. A double-headed anthropomorphic ear pendant of nephrite creates a link with Sahuynh culture.

In 1966, an earthenware jar filled with silver coins stamped with the conch motif was discovered, as was a laterite base 9 by 12 meters, a plain lingga, and a mukhalingga and yoni dated to about 550–650. In 1997, excavations at Khok Chang Din, a cluster of 20 historic sites west of U Thong, yielded Chinese ceramics of the late Tang dynasty (ninth century). An earthenware vessel with silver medals and cut silver was found in the same year.<sup>100</sup>

A copper plate inscription in Sanskrit from the seventh century mentions King Harsavarman, grandson of Isanavarman, who made offerings to linggas. This information fits available data on the son of Citrasena, who ruled until circa 630.

## Phong Tuek

The village of Phong Tuek, located on the west bank of the Mae Khlong about 30 kilometers west of Nakhon Pathom, was seminal to the formation of the image of Dvaravati in the 1930s. The site is best known for two items: a bronze lamp and a Buddha statue. These artifacts were initially dated to the Protohistoric but are now judged to belong to the Early Classic.<sup>101</sup> A number of burials have been

found there, some in association with Buddha image and remains of brick structures. In recent years, several other Dvaravati sites have yielded burials in similar associations. The nature of the association between burials and shrines remains unclear.<sup>102</sup> A Visnu statue from the seventh or eighth century is in a Buddhist wat at the site.<sup>103</sup>

### Phanom Surin shipwreck, Samut Sakhon Province

A well-preserved ancient ship recently found in a swamp in Samut Sakhon Province 8 kilometers from the coast, is at the time of writing under excavation by Erbprem Vatcharankul, head of the Thai Underwater Archaeology Department. It is of average size for a ship of this period; the exposed part is more than 25 meters long. Sherds of Tang jars found on board suggest a ninth-century date. An unglazed jar of this type had fibre ropes in all six of the lugs, often called “handles”, on the shoulder of the jar; this find along with others of similar nature shows that these “handles” were lugs to enable lids to be fastened with cords. A “torpedo jar” possibly from the west coast of India or the Near East found on board contains dammar (tree resin). Ceramics on board include carinated cord-marked and incised earthenware similar to local types found in central and northeast Thailand. Other contents of the ship include a possible stone anchor, rattan ropes, grains of rice, betel nuts, and ivory. The ship itself is thought to have been made in either India or the Near East; it resembles the Belitung shipwreck found in Indonesia from the same period.<sup>104</sup>

### Kamphaeng Saen

A moat 16 to 20 meters wide and a 2.5- to 4-meter high wall 18 to 30 meters wide enclose an irregular piece of ground of 53 hectares situated 25 kilometers northeast of Phong Tuek on the Huai Yang stream, which flows into the Tha Chin. Dupont found three standing Buddhas made of stucco-covered laterite which he assigned to late Dvaravati style. Brown dated a *dharmacakra* found there in 1963 to the late seventh or eighth century. There are four groups of monuments outside the enclosure, but no evidence of structures inside the moat. Test excavations in 2009–2010 found Dvaravati ceramics, ground stone, and glass beads. AMS dates indicate initial occupation to the fifth or sixth century CE, followed by intensive occupation into the seventh century, then decline until abandonment during the ninth century. In his survey of Dvaravati centers in central Thailand, Gallon found some monuments inside the walls, but very few compared to those outside. Those inside may have had some relationship to political elites. They tend to be larger.<sup>105</sup>

### Si Thep

Si Thep belongs to the group of second largest Dvaravati sites after Nakhon Pathom. It lies 280 kilometers north of Bangkok, near the foot of the Khorat Plateau. A Sanskrit inscription of the fifth or sixth

century and some very good sculptures have been discovered here; they may date from the same period as the inscription. Images include standing Buddhas; bodhisattvas; a stupa/*cakra*/Buddha triad; a gold plaque with stupa/*cakra*/Maitreya; a gold plaque with Buddha, two bodhisattvas, a stupa and *cakra*; four *dharmacakra*; some pillars and socles; fragments of *sema* stones; and votive tablets. Hindu material found at the site includes statues of Krisna, Visnu, and Surya. At least one large brick foundation was built before Khmer occupied it during the Angkor period.

### Muang Phra Rot

The important site of Muang Phra Rot in the northeast corner of the Gulf of Thailand, Chonburi Province, has Dvaravati-style pottery, but moulds for tin amulets like those from Oc-èo as well as stone and glass beads indicate an earlier phase of habitation. The site covers 1500 by 700 meters within a rectangular moat. Statuary includes a possible Visnu as well as Buddha images. The site may have been an important port which perhaps increased in importance during the Angkor period; imported ceramics from China (Tang and Song dynasties), and turquoise Persian ware have been found in excavations.<sup>106</sup>

### Muang Si Mahasot

A rectangular enclosure north of Muang Phra Rot, in Prachinburi Province, covering 1,550 by 700 meters, contains evidence of a long period of contact with India, including beads of polychrome glass, agate, and carnelian. It became a Khmer center during the Middle Classic. It may have been a polity transcribed *To yuan* which sent missions to China in 644 and 647. In 1975 at this site, a Visnu statue was found in the remains of a laterite shrine similar to one excavated in Beikthano, Myanmar.<sup>107</sup>

## KHORAT AND THE SIAMO-MALAY PENINSULA

“[O]ne of the most interesting outcomes of surveys and excavations . . . is the recognition of regional variability; that what is true for the northeast does not hold true for central, west or southern Thailand.”<sup>108</sup> “Subregional distinctiveness is particularly evident among ceramic assemblages during the first millennium, but is also reflected in other categories including mortuary practices.”<sup>109</sup> The next two brief sections serve to illustrate these observations by reference to the Khorat area and the isthmian region.

During the Early Classic, Khorat was settled by both Mon and Khmer speakers. Some areas display an affinity with Buddhism and the Chao Phraya valley, while others, particularly the lower Mun valley, are more closely connected with Siva and Khmer speakers. In the Middle Classic both areas became part of the Angkorian Empire, but in the Early Classic the plateau seems to have been ruled by autonomous kings.

## SEMA STONES OF NORTHEAST THAILAND

A particular type of stone sculpture is found at hundreds of sites (more are being constantly tabulated) in Khorat.<sup>110</sup> These are termed *sema* from the Thai word *baisema*, “boundary leaf” (Figure 5.2). In the Late Classic, stones carved in this shape (resembling leaves of the bodhi tree) were used as decorations on parapets of Ayutthaya, and later for the Bangkok palace. Now they usually just demarcate the *upavasa-thagara* hall (Sanskrit) of monasteries where ordinations take place. In Thai tradition, kings renounced their rights over the space within the boundaries marked by these stones.<sup>111</sup> This may have been the original purpose of the stones: to demarcate tax-free *sima* areas.

Early theories suggested that the stones may have been derived from prehistoric megaliths, but there is no evidence for this theory. Another precedent consists of survey markers set up when temples were laid out. Some of these at Prambanan, Java, in the ninth century are still in place. They were both ceremonial and functional. Architects in India paid great attention to the laying out of a temple’s ground plan because it was considered a mandala which could only function if the proper proportions were observed. One word for temple, *vimana*, literally means “well-measured, well-proportioned”.<sup>112</sup> The second possibility is that they represent *kala-makara* ornaments which often decorate the tops and sides of temple doors and niches for statues in Java. A third possibility is that they are related to stone slabs erected in front of the staircases at Buddhist shrines in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.

Inscriptions are written on *sema* stones and frequently found in association with brick foundations interpreted as the remains of Buddhist structures.<sup>113</sup> At sites such as Muang Fa Daed in the Lam Pao valley, Buddhist carvings are found in great numbers in association with brick stupa and other Buddhist structures. Buddha images in what is interpreted as Dvaravati style have been found at several sites: fragments of Buddha images at Muang Sema and Hin Tang, a statue at Ban Thamen Chai, and a group of Buddhist images from Phrakon Chai.<sup>114</sup>

In Laos, on the east side of the Mekong, 30 *sema* stones have been found. The seventeenth parallel of latitude seems to mark the northernmost extent of Khmer culture. Mon and pre-Angkorian remains are found together around That Phon and the confluence of the Se Bang Fai. Sites with both Mon and Khmer-style artifacts (e.g., *sema* stones, Khmer-style sandstone architectural pieces) are found near the Lao Bao Pass which leads to Quang Tri Province, Vietnam.<sup>115</sup>

## EARLY CLASSIC POTTERY OF KHORAT

After a period of relative continuity for 1,000 years, the Early Classic in Khorat is marked by several major changes. Burials changed to cremation. More technically advanced high-fired, wheel-made pottery appeared over a wider area. This could be connected with a Dvaravati horizon. During the Early Classic the largest sites on Khorat were ceremonial centers, but there is no evidence that they had any administrative functions. Art styles were becoming more widespread than in the Protoclassic, but there is no sign of political change. In the Middle Classic, Phimai became a dominant center, much larger than





Figure 5.2 Sema stone, Phimai Museum

others, but smaller ones had similar rectangular walls and narrower moats around settlements which were foci of economic and political activity.

In the 1950s, evidence from art, history, and archaeology tended to support the conclusion that Mon influence from Dvaravati, possibly accompanied by political domination, spread from the Chao Phraya basin to Khorat. Subsequent reconsideration of inscriptions, however, suggests that the southern part of Khorat had stronger connections with Cambodia than with the central Thai plain. Use of Sanskrit and Khmer languages suggest a link to what the Chinese called Zhenla. Pottery typical of the Dvaravati polity (or now might be designated as a Dvaravati horizon style) is distributed mainly in the Phimai region.<sup>116</sup> Protoclassic and Early Classic Phimai pottery has closer links to the lower Mekong than the Chao Phraya.<sup>117</sup>

In the Protoclassic, the Phimai pottery tradition (which was confined to the upper Mun valley) disappeared, and was replaced by Muang Sema ceramics: more high-fired, wheel-turned pottery with incising. Inhumation burial disappeared. Muang Sema and Muang Fa Daed were the most impressive of large centers established in northeast Thailand. The patterning of habitation sites did not change; the alluvial plain of the Mun River with its suitability for rice cultivation was still most densely inhabited. The largest sites appear to be primarily ceremonial, not administrative. This contrasts with the Middle Classic, when the ceremonial precincts were enclosed by larger rectangular, planned, walled and moated towns.

The first inscriptions from Khorat date to the beginning of the Early Classic. One, at Thom Pet Thong cave, at the southwest corner of the plateau, records the erection of a lingga by Citrasena, brother of Bhavavarman I, first known ruler of Zhenla (550–600). The second commemorates a statue of Sri, goddess of fortune, at the moated site of Chan Tuk. At Muang Sema, an inscription in the village of Bo Ika bears inscriptions on two sides. One was carved around 700 CE in Sanskrit, and records a donation to a Buddhist monastery by the ruler of Canasa. The second face, dated 863, is bilingual; the Sanskrit portion invokes Siva, and the Khmer section says that a lingga was set up by Ansadeva, who had taken over an area outside the Khmer kingdom. The small number of polities from Zhenla sending missions to China is probably evidence of political centralization. The increase in polities sending tribute in the eighth century indicated political fragmentation.<sup>118</sup> Khmer power in the Mun area was increasing at the expense of Mon polities.

## MUANG SEMA

Muang Sema is comparatively large (755 by 1,845 meters), with two moated and ramparted areas. The lower strata contain ceramics related to the Dvaravati horizon from central Thailand, including carinated and incised bowls and Buddhist artifacts including a wheel of the law, overlain by Khmer-type pottery from the Middle Classic.<sup>119</sup> The interior of the moated area has not one large mound, but several small mounds, each with remains of brick or laterite buildings. It may have been a large ceremonial center, without economic or political functions. Partial excavation of one of the shrines yielded Dvaravati-style artifacts of the seventh and subsequent centuries, including a stone *dharmacakra*, a reclining Buddha, and an inscription connected with Sri Chanasa.

## SRI CANASA (CHANASA)

The kingdom of Sri Canasa (Chanasa) controlled part of northeast Thailand from the seventh to tenth centuries. It may have been responsible for the construction of a number of moated sites. Muang Sema has been proposed as the location of the capital in the seventh century. A seventh-century inscription in Sanskrit found there commemorates donations to a Buddhist community by Sri Chanasa's ruler. No Hindu objects have been found at Muang Sema, but at nearby Phra Ngam Cave, Buddha is shown perhaps teaching Siva and Visnu. A figure of a Brahmin or *rishi* is worshipping them.

Chanasapura is mentioned in an inscription dated 937 found on the island in the Chao Phraya River which later became the capital of Ayutthaya. The inscription is written in Sanskrit and Khmer, and gives a genealogy of a line of kings. The king responsible for the inscription, Mangalavarman, erected a statue of Dewi in honor of his mother. A list of people who donated to the temple implies that the inhabitants of the area were Khmer rather than Mon.

## MUANG FA DAED

Muang Fa Daed is the largest moated site in northeast Thailand, covering 171 hectares. It is located in the northern part of the Chi River basin. Song Yang has more than 14 religious structures (stupas and viharas) both inside and outside a "complex of waterways", but little habitation refuse.<sup>120</sup> Both these centers (Muang Fa Daed and Muang Sema) may be evidence of a cultural sphere expanding from the Chao Phraya valley.<sup>121</sup> Three brick stupas in the northern sector of the site reflect Dvaravati style. The site is known for its large concentration of *sima* markers decorated with Jataka scenes from the sixth to ninth centuries, in a style related to Dvaravati art.

## WENDAN

The kingdom of Wendan is mentioned in Chinese sources of the Early Classic period. It may have been in the Khorat area. A ninth-century Chinese writer described a trade route which started at Hanoi and crossed the western mountains to Wendan.<sup>122</sup>

## KHMER POWER IN THE MUN RIVER VALLEY

The Mun River valley was integral to Angkor during the Classic period. Although some Dvaravati-style sculptures are found here, during the Middle Classic it was part of the interaction sphere of the great Angkorian mandala. The Mahidharapura dynasty from Phimai ruled Angkor during its most glorious phase. The valley may have been inhabited by Khmer speakers as far north as the watershed between the Mun and the Chi, and the original inhabitants of the Mun were possibly Khmer speakers who arrived

there in the Bronze Age.<sup>123</sup> The division between Mon and Khmer speakers may be reflected by different pottery styles found in the Chi basin: the red painted wares of Non Chai and Ban Chiang Hian. Art historians tend to see close links between the Khorat Plateau and Chao Phraya valley where Dvaravati style flourished. Epigraphic evidence leads textual historians to emphasize connections with Cambodia. Sanskrit, not Pali, predominated. Phimai-area pottery is not closely related to Dvaravati pottery of central Thailand.

Inscriptions in the Nakhon Ratchasima area mention rulers with Sanskrit names, probably Khmer speakers, but at Hin Khon, 35 kilometers south of Nakhon Ratchasima, a king who ruled at Sro Vraah erected four sema stones in the eighth century, and gave rice fields, betel trees, slaves, animals, and gold and silver utensils to a Buddhist temple.

Three inscriptions from the early seventh-century King Mahendravarman, who may have ruled at Sambor Prei Kuk, have been found at the junction of the Mun and Mekong Rivers.<sup>124</sup> The Khan Thevada stele records his ancestry. He says he received his name in a royal lustration ceremony and set up a lingga on a mountain to commemorate his conquest. The Tham Pu Manai stele mentions a statue of Siva's bull, Nandi. At Sri Muang Aem, 40 kilometers north of Khon Kaen, a monument was built to celebrate a victory by his overlord, which is difficult to reconcile with the idea that he was an overlord.<sup>125</sup> At Prachinburi, an inscription says he built a water tank.

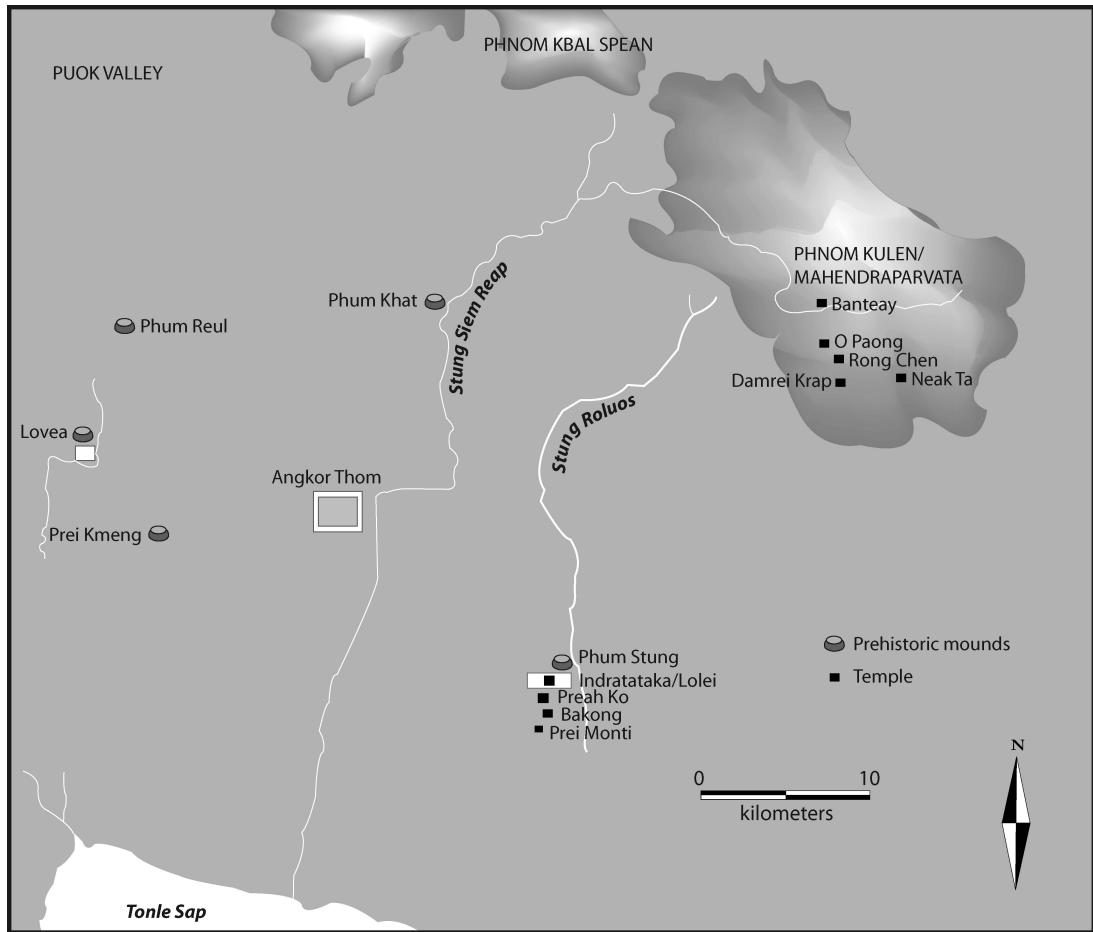
### Early Classic temples in Thailand

There are remnants of Khmer-style structures in the Mun valley with clear links to Cambodia. The oldest one in good condition is Prasat Hin Phon.<sup>126</sup> Brick temples at Phnom Rung were possibly connected with inscriptions from the seventh or eighth century.<sup>127</sup> Bricks beneath the central sanctuary at Prasat Hin Phimai may represent an Early Classic temple; however, in central Java, Candi Sewu, a Buddhist temple built in the late eighth century, has a core of brick which had been built intentionally as part of a consecration ritual and is not a remnant of a previous building. At Phimai, a door jamb incorporates an eighth-century inscription (K. 1000) describing a Buddhist king named Sauryavarman (*Saurya* means valor, might).<sup>128</sup>

On the opposite side of the Mekong, in southern Laos, several highly significant Khmer sites of the Early Classic are known. The most prominent of these is Wat Phu.

### EARLY CLASSIC CAMBODIA

The name *Cambodia* (Figure 5.3) is derived from *Kambuja*, first used in the inscriptions of Indravarman (877–899) which call him “sovereign of the Kambuja”. The word Kambuja in turn comes from a legend about the first two Khmer, a *risi*, or ascetic named Kambu, and a nymph named Mera given to him by Siva. This story is first mentioned in 947 CE in an inscription at the temple of Baksei Chamkrong. Another story mentioned the very next year refers to a legend according to which the Khmer are the descendants of an Indian Brahmana named Kaundinya and a *naga* princess named Soma.



**Figure 5.3** Early Classic Angkor region

Cambodian history is normally divided into three periods: pre-Angkor (third century to 802 CE), Angkor (802–1432), and post-Angkor. The pre-Angkor period is mainly known from seventh-century inscriptions; Angkor epigraphy begins in the late ninth century. Thus there is a crucial gap in our sources during the critical transitional phase. It is actually a misnomer to date the Angkor period from 802. The first king to establish a capital in this area, Jayavarman II, built his palace on Phnom Kulen. The Hariharalaya complex at Roluos was probably the major administrative and religious center for most of the ninth century. Only at the end of the ninth century, at the transition to the Middle Classic, did Yasovarman build a royal complex at Angkor.

Ancient historical sources from Cambodia include a very few texts in Pali, some in Sanskrit, and some in Old Khmer. Many consist of two parts of which one is written in Sanskrit and one in Khmer. Usually the two parts contain different information.

The earliest dated inscriptions in Cambodian territory were written in Sanskrit in 611 CE. They come from Angkor Borei, which was perhaps one of the capitals of Funan. Another inscription thought to have been commissioned by King Jayavarman I around 650 CE mentions Funan's last ruler, Rudravarman, who lived in Angkor Borei. The Ba Phnom inscription of 667 CE records that for four generations, one family served as ministers to five kings (Rudravarman, Bhavavarman II, Mahendravarman/Citrasena, Isanavarman, and Jayavarman I).<sup>129</sup>

The Chinese thought that the 400-year-old kingdom of Funan fell to its former vassal Zhenla in the late sixth century, after which Zhenla split into two kingdoms, Land and Water Zhenla. The Chinese had no regular diplomatic relations with Cambodia for some time after Funan's collapse. Local inscriptions and archaeology are the only source of information about Early Classic Cambodia. Zhenla remained the Chinese name for Cambodia for 600 years. In ancient times these characters would have been pronounced *zhenlap*. The origin of the name has not been satisfactorily explained.

At the end of the sixth century, brief Sanskrit inscriptions record the erection of linggas representing small Khmer polities north of the Dangrek Mountains. Citrasena, alias Mahendravarman, left inscriptions from south Laos to Ubon, Thailand; Bhavavarman, his elder brother, left inscriptions in Battambang (northwest Cambodia) and Si Thep, Thailand. Conventionally these sources are viewed as evidence of the existence of Zhenla, conqueror of Funan. Only four inscriptions have been found in the area of south Cambodia and Vietnam thought to have been Funan's core, whereas more than 15 are known from the Dangrek region. Whereas the rulers of the Dangrek area were mainly followers of Siva, south Cambodia was marked by a heterogeneous set of statuary portraying Visnu, Durga, Harihara, and Buddha.

When the first inscriptions in Khmer were carved, Cambodia's economy was in transition. The coastal trading orientation which had characterized Funan was collapsing, while agrarian-based centers were evolving. Some interest in trade persisted into the eighth century, but thereafter the economy seems to have been agrarian, run by bureaucracy. Cambodia shifted from highly heterogenetic to extremely orthogenetic.

Seventh-century Cambodia was divided among several small polities. The Chinese were aware of five principalities in northwest Cambodia, four of which sent missions in 638. Sambhupura (in Kratie, in northeast Cambodia) had its own dynasty in its eighth century. At times they were under the control of one overlord such as Citrasena. By the seventh century a few Khmer nobles were beginning to establish realms in the Chao Phraya valley, but Angkor's control over that area was only firmly established in the eleventh century by Suryavarman I. A Sanskrit inscription of the seventh century found at U Thong was issued by a grandson of Isanavarman, ruler of central Cambodia.

Egalitarian society survived much longer in mainland Seasia than in other parts of the world, but hereditary rank developed in the Khmer realm by the eighth century. Warfare seems to have become more frequent, though Early Classic inscriptions rarely refer to military action. They refer to donations of rice field workers to temples, but not to irrigation. Agriculture was probably dependent on trapping floodwater or rainfall. Another possibility around the Tonle Sap was a system of natural pumping by raising the level of groundwater through a unique, complex system. Early Cambodian water retention systems consisted of U-shaped earthen dams open on the uphill side, in a system similar to that of Java.<sup>130</sup> Inscriptions contain no references to plowing, but mention water buffalo and use of a yoke.



When a choice had to be made, the Khmer of the Early Classic were willing to sacrifice a temple to build a dike or reservoir, as at Ak Yom when the western Baray was built.

Seventh-century inscriptions focus on officials called *pon*, who gained high status by founding temples and *trawang*, reservoirs. Some *pon* were chiefs of villages of up to 1,000 people living around ponds, while others had influence over broader areas. Some villages had more than one *pon*. The societies of these small *pon*-doms were highly stratified, with numerous levels: officials entitled *pon* or *mratan* occupied the summit, followed by females who had important ritual functions; dancers, singers, and musicians; craft specialists; and at the bottom, agricultural workers. All titles were Khmer, not Sanskrit.<sup>131</sup>

*Pon* status was inherited matrilineally, from one's mother's brother. Pre-Angkor inscriptions of kings suggest a tendency toward a similar pattern of inheritance, though rulers sometimes tried to enable their own sons to succeed them through the abdication method described previously. The *pon* title disappeared after 719, indicating a probable shift in the basis of political power and the strengthening of patrilineality. The title *mratan* became more significant; the word was probably taken from Austro-nesian (Malayo-Polynesian). A hierarchy of settlements began to appear, using Sanskrit: *nagara*, *pura*, *grama*, with the Khmer word *sruk* at the lowest rung, perhaps equivalent to *grama*.<sup>132</sup>

Between 681 and 770, inscriptions are rare. Only 11 Khmer and six Sanskrit inscriptions survive from this period, and only two names of rulers are known. One was a queen, Jayadevi, who ruled in the Angkor region in 713. The other, King Nrapaditya, was somehow connected with her. Kinship relations between maternal uncles remained significant in determining social ranking. There were other kings in other areas, but their names were not recorded. This was connected with a period of feminine ascendancy. An inscription from Sambhupura dated 803 records three consecutive queens. Coincidentally, the previous year, 802, is the traditional founding date of Angkor.

Despite the lack of inscriptions, many architectural remains from this period are known, so Khmer society was not disorganized during this period. Between 791 and 877 there is another long gap in history: only a single text survives. This is unfortunate, because during this period of silence, from approximately 700 to 900, major changes occurred in Cambodian society, including the transfer of the center of power and population from the Mekong Delta to northwest Cambodia, 300 kilometers away; the adoption of a new format for inscriptions; new names for deities; and new words for economic subjects. Coinage disappeared.

In the eighth century the Sanskrit term *mulya*, "value", was used to refer to silver and cloth as ways of comparing prices, but debts were usually paid in rice. Recorded transactions were usually sales of land. After 802, even these measures of value disappear; land was not bought and sold. In fact, no buying and selling of any sort is attested; only barter trade. In Angkor, the bureaucracy supervised the distribution of goods and services.<sup>133</sup>

## THE BEGINNING OF THE ANGKOR PERIOD

Around 800, a ruler named Jayavarman II is said to have founded a dynasty which lasted for two centuries. The area now called Angkor became the site of the palace around 900, but moved to Koh Ker from 922 to 944. Only in 945 did the palace move back there where it remained for 500 years.

Jayavarman II left no inscriptions, but later generations often referred to him. He probably began his career in the southeast, near Funan, possibly at a place called Vyadhapura. An inscription dated 655 has been found near Banteay Prei Nokor, province of Kompong Cham. A site here consists of five reservoirs on one axis, extensive walls 2.5 kilometers square, and a 100-meter-wide moat, but has not been systematically excavated. The site may have been founded in the Protoclassic period. Some have speculated that this was a capital of Funan, but it may not have been an important place, since it is located in a rather peripheral area near Champa.<sup>134</sup> Sixteen Angkor-period texts, 10 from northwest Cambodia, mention it.

Jayavarman I moved north, first to Isanapura, where he married the queen. Later he took people from Vyadhapura much farther west to Battambang, northwest of the Tonle Sap, then to Angkor. This may indicate that the mass of the population was already subject to the commands of the ruler. In 802, according to the Sdok Kak Thom inscription written exactly 250 years later, he had himself consecrated cakravartin on Phnom Kulen, initiating the Angkor period. His officials bore new titles, signifying a new style of rulership. His empire was marked by frequent succession disputes. Of 26 kings of Angkor, only eight were sons or brothers of the previous king. In the eleventh century, his lineage was replaced by another dynasty which came from the opposite direction: the north.

A king from the Cham region, Fan Zhen Cheng, sent embassies to China in 456, 458, and 472. Coedès thought he was the father or grandfather of a king named Devanika. Later Cambodian oral tradition says that the descendants of Kambu and Mera conquered the Cham in the area of Champassak and established a capital known as Sresthapura. Probably these were all later legends, however; Early Classic records never mention any of these people.<sup>135</sup>

## WAT PHU AND CHAMPASSAK, SOUTHERN LAOS

Coedès<sup>136</sup> considered Wat Phu in southern Laos as the place from which Zhenla expanded to conquer Funan. A late fifth-century inscription (K. 365) has been found at a temple, Wat Luang Kao, at the eastern tip of the Dangrek range where it meets the Mekong floodplain, less than 5 kilometers from Wat Phu. The inscription in Sanskrit language and Brahmi script mentions King Devanika who was a *maharajadhiraja* from a distant country who obtained royal power by the grace of the Sri Linggaparvata. The inscription also records the establishment of a new pilgrimage center, Kuruksetra, named after an important site in the Indian epics.<sup>137</sup> The “king of kings who came from far away” may have come from Funan or Si Thep. Wat Phu was not isolated; it was part of a network from the delta to the Se Bang Fai during pre-Angkorian times. In two other inscriptions found nearby (carved around 600 CE), King Mahendravarman honors his father and uncle. A total of 16 inscriptions attributed to him extend 70 kilometers farther north, almost to the confluence with the Mun. His son Isanavarman I (reigned circa 612–637) did not leave any inscriptions north of the Dangrek; he ruled from Sambor Prei Kuk. Jayavarman I (circa 655–680) and his successor Bhavavarman II (reigned circa 637–655) probably lived in Champassak.

Wat Luan Kao and Wat Phu are situated at the point where a traveler moving north leaves the Cambodian plain and enters the Khorat Plateau. This has been a historic meeting place and dividing line. An

overland route 100 kilometers long leads across the Boloven Plateau from Attapeu to Huei Tomo. Wat Luang Kao consists of a complex of ramparts enclosing numerous foundations of ancient structures. Archaeological research was conducted there in the 1990s.<sup>138</sup> More pre-Angkorian monuments were found around Wat Phu in 2011 and 2013.<sup>139</sup>

Only two sites in Laos have rectangular ramparts, Wat Phu and Nong Hua Thong, where a more rounded enclosure was later combined with a straight double wall. The main sites in Cambodia which are comparable to Wat Phu at this time are Sambor Prei Kuk and Banteay Prei Nokor. Laos does not have large sites with moats like those on the western part of the Khorat Plateau such as Si Thep or Dong Si Mahasot, or protohistoric sites such as Noen U-Loke, Ban Non Wat, or Nong Mueang Kao. However, some smaller sites on the left bank of the Mekong may be related to this type, such as Ban Tamyae, Pit Tong, and Nong Phayu in the lower Mun basin (Si Sa Ket Province).<sup>140</sup>

The *History of the Sui* states that Zhenla, located “southwest of Linyi”, was originally Funan’s vassal. Near the capital was a mountain with a temple on the summit, dedicated to *Po-do-li* (*Bhatara*, Siva) guarded by 1,000 soldiers, where humans were sacrificed to the local spirit. It has been speculated that the place referred to was Wat Phu. This is the site of an important Early Classic temple complex in southern Laos, near the modern town of Champassak, at the foot of a mountain called Phu Kao, at the peak of which stands a large natural monolith, near which a spring of water flows. This was probably *Ling-qia-bo-po* (*Linggaparvata*, or “mountain of the *lingga*” in Sanskrit) mentioned in the sixth-century Chinese text. The site was probably regarded with supernatural awe long before King Jayavarman I constructed a shrine there in the eighth century.

Fifty sites have been found in the area which Parmentier<sup>141</sup> defined as pre-Angkorian Laos. Twelve lintels have been found in Champassak in the past 20 years, all from the Early Classic period, all simpler than those found in Cambodia.<sup>142</sup> In the Champassak plain are 24 pre-Angkorian sites, mainly near rivers, in contrast to Middle Classic sites in the same region, which lie along the land route to Angkor. Where the Huei Tomo River joins the Mekong 10 kilometers from Wat Phu, there are both pre-Angkor and Angkorian remains, including a Middle Classic temple and a hostel set up by Yasovarman I. Rectangular ponds (*baray*, *trapeang*) are found in Champassak but almost nowhere else in Laos.<sup>143</sup>

Khmer-style artifacts are found as far north as the seventeenth parallel; at that point Khmer-style sandstone architectural fragments are found in the same context as *sema* stones associated with the Mon. The Khone Falls on the Mekong do not seem to have constituted a barrier to communication. The Sedon River, on the east side of the Mekong, with a confluence 40 kilometers downstream from the Mun, is a favourable route for north-south communication, bypassing this sector of the Mekong where there are rapids. The large town of Pakse is located here. Lorillard<sup>144</sup> notes six pre-Angkorian sites along the Sedon River’s course.

## TRANS-ANNAMITE CORDILLERA CONNECTIONS

The Annamite Cordillera poses a significant barrier between the Mekong and the east coast of Vietnam. The most significant route into the mountains is formed by the Sekong River, a tributary of the Mekong

which flows from Attapeu Province in southern Laos into Stung Treng in northeast Cambodia before joining the Mekong. Attapeu is located at the point at which the Sekaman joins the Sekong. Sekaman is a major river leading to the border with Quang Nam. On the western side of the watershed are important sites including Wat Phu; on the east are sites such as My Son on the Thu Bon River.

The word *Attapue* in Lao has a colorful meaning: “big heap of buffalo dung”. The name is said to have been derived from the role of this region as a center for buffalo trade in the past. A survey in Attapue in 2009 and 2010 located remains of brick and laterite buildings, Classic-period sculpture and architectural elements, and Khmer-type *baray/trapeang*.<sup>145</sup>

No inscriptions have been found in Attapeu, but the region played a major role in regional communication. In Savannakhet Province, where there are major ancient sanctuaries, three Sanskrit inscriptions on silver plates and a bowl in a hoard found in 2008 record donations to a Siva sanctuary. They are palaeographically dated to the eighth century. Attapeu does have three pre-Angkorian lintels. At Ban Thatkum, very close to the Vietnam border (in former Cham territory), an important early stele has been found with a trident for Siva in the middle, *kamandalu* (water pot) for Brahma on one side, and *cakra* (discus) for Visnu on the other.<sup>146</sup> The area of Stung Treng and Thala Borivat where the Sekong flows into the Mekong less than 50 kilometers downstream from the border between Cambodia and Laos at the Khone Falls, is rich in archaeological sites.<sup>147</sup>

The connection between Cambodia and the Khorat region during the Early Classic mainly followed the Mekong. The western side of Khorat has yielded little Early Classic material. When Phimai became a major power and the road west of the Dangrek Mountains was built, the old route to Wat Phu continued to be important as a link to Quang Tri in Vietnam, but Cambodia was now linked to both eastern and western neighbours. Once again, in the Early Classic, it seems that political units could not cross mountains, but people and goods and therefore trade routes certainly did.

## ZHENLA

In the seventh century, after Funan disintegrated (probably of natural causes rather than external attack), the Chinese were aware of five polities in northern Cambodia. Four of them sent missions in the same year (638). At times they may have come under the control of one maharaja, but the various small mandalas maintained their local senses of identity and politics. When China became reunited under the Tang dynasty, Seasian rajas rushed to send missions in order to obtain Chinese recognition. At least 69 missions from 24 Seasian kingdoms reached the seventh-century Tang court, eight of them from Zhenla.

Early historians supposed that in the early eighth century Zhenla split into two kingdoms, “Land Zhenla” in the north, and “Water Zhenla” in the south. In 716, a king named Puskaraksa became king in Sambhupura, now called Sambor Prei Kuk, where a well-preserved group of sanctuaries is found. This may have been the chief principality in the middle Mekong portion of Cambodia at this time. It is possible that no single ruler was able to accumulate more than local power at this period. Chinese sources use the names Wendan and Poluo to refer to polities in Cambodia during the period between Funan and Angkor.

“Water Zhenla” seems to have been composed of an agglomeration of warring kingdoms. The most important may have been Aninditapura, one of whose rulers was Baladitya. He assumed an important role in later royal genealogies: kings of Angkor were wont to regard him as their link with the Indian Brahman Kaundinya and the *naga* princess Soma.

In 753 Land Zhenla sent an embassy to China. In 754 a prince of Land Zhenla accompanied Chinese troops fighting in Nanzhao. More embassies were sent in the late eighth century. Inscriptions from this period are found in the area of Sambor, near the Mekong, where they cite a ruler named Jayavarman. In 803 a “senior queen”, Jyestharya, great-granddaughter of King Indraloka, endowed a temple there too. An inscription dated 791 found in Siem Reap Province was carved on the occasion of the consecration of a statue of the deity Lokesvara and is the first written evidence that Buddhists in Cambodia worshipped bodhisattvas.

Politically the situation in Cambodia was fluid at this time. Artistically the period was productive, with numerous statues of high quality attributed to the eighth century. Socially important transitions were taking place, but because of the dearth of inscriptions from the Zhenla era, we are unable to analyze them in detail.

## ZHENLA AND SAMBOR PREI KUK

Sambor Prei Kuk was the site of Isanapura, an important pre-Angkorian capital in northeastern Cambodia. Bhavavarman I, who was in power around 598, may have lived here, but we do not know what he called his capital. This may well be the center of the polity which the Chinese thought of as Zhenla.

Citrasena, cousin of Bhavavarman I, seems to have succeeded him around 600, taking the reign name Mahendravarman. His territory may have straddled the modern border between Thailand and Cambodia; he left Sanskrit inscriptions recording the erection of linggas and statues of Siva’s bull, Nandi, in Kratie and Stung Treng in Cambodia, and in northeast Thailand.

Jayavarman I may have been a son of Bhavavarman II. He was ruling by 657. He left inscriptions over a very large area, from Wat Phu in Laos to the shore of the Gulf of Siam, and built temples at Ba Phnom (possibly the site of Vyadhapura). The next known ruler of Cambodia was a queen, Jayadevi, whose relationship to Jayavarman I is unknown. Isanapura was probably given this name in the seventh century by Isanavarman, who reigned from about 616/17 to about 635, and left many inscriptions at Sambor Prei Kuk. Isanavarman was the son of Mahendravarman. From here he ruled a territory which stretched from southeastern Cambodia to northeastern Thailand. He may also be responsible for the oldest structures erected at Phnom Bayang, Takeo Province, in southeastern Cambodia. He was king by 616/617, when he sent an embassy to China, and was still reigning in 627. We do not know precisely when he died.

Isanavarman thus lived at a time when the Chinese thought that Funan was breaking apart and being conquered by Zhenla. The inscriptions of Isanavarman and the Kdei Ang inscription, dated 667, suggest gradual evolution rather than violent revolution. They indicate that Isanavarman established hegemony over strategic areas and appointed a son to rule in the west but did not need to attack the Mekong Delta to do so.

Ma Duanlin in the thirteenth century, quoting the sixth-century *History of the Sui*, describes *Yi-she-na*, which is probably the Chinese transliteration of Isanapura, as having five ministers and many minor officials. He said that the city had a population of more than 20,000 families, with a royal audience hall in the center, dwellings, and a palace, besides temples enclosed in a double wall. Xuan Zang mentioned Isanapura around 650. Isanapura seems to have had close relations with Champa.

Archaeological remains there include 10 major temples in an area covering 100 square kilometers, divided into three groups (north, central, and southern), each enclosed by a wall. Two inscriptions of Isanavarman I were found in the south group between the main shrine and a temple dedicated to Siva's mount, Nandi. The main building in the south group is the largest at the site. The architecture follows Indian models more closely than did the builders of later periods, indicating that these structures were designed before Cambodian architects had had time to imprint their own stamp on them. One example of an Indian feature is the *somasutra*, a drain for lustral liquids which became common in India beginning in the early eighth century but was only used in a few of the earliest Hindu structures in Seasia, including one on the Dieng Plateau, Java.

Several art styles existed in Cambodia during the early seventh century. One, called Sambor, was created between 617 and 637 (Isanavarman's reign). Important statues of this style include Harihara and Uma from the north group of Sambor Prei Kuk, which is not as securely dated as the south group. The Prei Kmeng style (638–681) was named after a site in Angkor, started in the reign of Isanavarman's son Bhavavarman II, and is mainly associated with architecture. This was followed by Prasat Andet (657–681) during the reign of Jayavarman I. A statue of Harihara, a fusion of Siva and Visnu, in a different style, was found at Prasat Andet, but architecture seems to have remained more or less the same as during the previous phase. There seems to have been two different lines of development in the region.

After Jayavarman I, no names of reigning kings are known until Jayavarman II, whose reign began in 770.

## RETURN TO ANGKOR BOREI

By the mid-eighth century, Rajendravarman II of Zhenla united these rival kingdoms and a third, Vyadhapura, and established a capital at Angkor Borei. Inscriptions from this period refer to Rajendravarman II as the king of Sambhupura. Some scholars argued that Jayavarman II united Zhenla and became the ruler of Sambhupura during his military campaigns of the early eighth century. At the end of the century, Jayavarman II moved to the Angkor region.

## EARLY CLASSIC ANGKOR

When Jayavarman II reached the Angkor area, people had already been there for centuries. A grave under the West Baray dates from the Preclassic.<sup>148</sup> Construction of the West Baray destroyed an indefinite number of earlier sites. Phum Snay and Phum Krosaing Thmei west of Angkor were large sites of the Preclassic and Protoclassic periods.



The Sdok Kak Thom inscription was found in the ruins of a small sanctuary originally called Bhadrāniketana, the temple of a family which traced its descent to Sivakaivalya. This is not a personal name, but rather the name of a lineage of priests. The best *sivakaivalyas* were said to be the Brahmanas of Aryavarta in India. People from surrounding countries such as Kalinga and Kosala could not become *sivakaivalyas*. Sivakaivalyas had been the royal chaplains of the Khmer kings and guardians of royal *linggas* since the sixth century. The inscription was set up by a former priest named Sadasiva who a few years before 1052 had married the sister-in-law of king Udayadityavarman II and left the priesthood. This was necessary because priests of this type could not marry. The inscription marked a sort of farewell to the priestly functions of the family (and perhaps a step upward in status). Another family, the Saptadevakula, then took over the functions of chief priests of the *devaraja*.

Many generations of Angkorian rulers glorified Jayavarman II. Two inscriptions dated 770 and 781 may record his very early career, but they date from long before his move to the Angkor area. They probably relate to his exploits in southeast Cambodia and Kratie. He is also prominently featured in the genealogy of King Yasovarman. Jayavarman II was said to have been the great-grandnephew of a king of Sambhupura through his mother's line (the importance of maternal lineage again), and also the nephew of a King Jayendradhipativarman, of whom nothing whatsoever is known. In other words, his background is obscure.

The Sdok Kak Thom inscription provides the most concrete information about Jayavarman II's origins, but since it was carved exactly 250 years after the ceremony on Phnom Kulen, it is difficult to decide how much we should trust it. It says that he came from Java (without telling us why he was there) and assumed the throne of Indrapura. The locations of Indrapura and Java are both controversial. Most historians believe that the "Java" mentioned here is the island of Java (or possibly South Sumatra) in Indonesia.<sup>149</sup> An Arab legend says that the Maharaja of Zabag had the vainglorious ruler of Cambodia decapitated. If there is any factual basis for the story, it would have taken place in the late eighth century when Arabs were visiting Seasia and the Indonesian kingdoms of Srivijaya and Java were flourishing. Jayavarman II may have been sent to Java as a young man for an education, and then sent back to Cambodia to act as a Javanese viceroy; this strategy was employed by Javanese kingdoms, which did not attempt to rule foreign conquered territories directly. This could explain why he moved into the distant hinterland: to escape Javanese reprisals.

Next, according to the Sdok Kak Thom inscription, Jayavarman II and his son Indrayudha defeated a Cham force in 790, and then moved to the area north of the Great Lake. He gave Sivakaivalya an estate which is thought to have been in the area of Angkor. Jayavarman II then moved his palace several times. First he established it at Hariharalaya (city of Siva and Visnu), now called Roluos, 15 kilometers southeast of Angkor. Then he moved to Amarendrapura, the location of which is unknown, and then to Mahendraparvata, Kulen Plateau, where a Brahmana named Hiranyadama from Janapada performed a ritual to ensure that the country of the Kambujas would be free forever from Java, and to ensure that there would be only one *cakravartin*. Hiranyadama also created a *devaraja*, and taught Sivakaivalya sacred rituals, including the *devaraja* ritual, which then became the hereditary responsibility of Sivakaivalya's family. Afterward, Jayavarman II returned to Hariharalaya (modern Roluos), taking the *devaraja* with him; and that is where he died, supposedly in 850 after a reign of 48 years.

His son Jayavardhana had already assumed the throne in 834. The only known archaeological remains of temples attributed to his reign are found at Sambor Prei Kuk and Phnom Kulen; none are known from Angkor or Roluos. He was given the posthumous name *Paramesvara*, sometimes associated with Siva. His son Jayavardhana reigned at Hariharalaya until 857 as Jayavarman III. He seems to have shifted his religious affiliation to Visnu.

## MAHENDRAPARVATA AND PHNOM KULEN (HILL OF LYCHEES)

Mahendra (from *Maha*, great, and Indra, king of the gods) is the name of a mountain in Indian mythology, part of the Mount Meru complex where the gods live. Jayavarman II was cited in many later Angkorian inscriptions as “the king who established his residence on the summit of Mount Mahendra”. It is believed that this place corresponds to Phnom Kulen, northeast of Angkor. A number of archaeological remains, including an extensive system of dams and reservoirs, temples in pre-Angkorian style, and pottery kilns, were known to exist there. It is thought that a pyramid made of laterite blocks called Krus Preah Aram Rong Chen may be the site of the ritual which traditionally signifies Angkor’s founding.

A particular style of early Khmer architecture has been named after the plateau. It consists of simple brick towers with square plans containing small chambers found here, at Sambor Prei Kuk, and at Prei Prasat. Kulen-style sculpture has links to Gupta India, but even the earliest known examples have distinctive local characteristics, including realistic depictions of human torsos. Most examples are statues of Visnu with tall mitres, or Harihara (statues depicting Siva on the left side, Visnu on the right). The famous facial expression known as the “Smile of Angkor” began to appear.

Temple construction probably began on Kulen at the same time as at Sambor Prei Kuk; Prasat Neak Ta and Prasat O Paong closely resemble sanctuaries at Sambor. Prasat Neak Ta (also called Prasat Andon) may have been the first structure to be erected on the plateau. Next, built around 800, was Prasat O Paong, which can be dated to the early ninth century by false doorways on false stories, which represent influence from Java.<sup>150</sup> Decoration on Prasat Thmar Dap resembles the Javanese temple Kalasan in 795. Rong Cen, the biggest building on Kulen, was modelled on Borobudur. Cham influence can also be detected on the corner stones of the Damrei Krap temple, which the Chams themselves had obtained from India.

In 2012, major new discoveries were made with the aid of a new remote-sensing technique called Lidar. Large-scale reservoirs and other structures were found. Research on those sites has just begun; more information about the Early Classic period of Cambodia is sure to appear soon.

## HARIHARALAYA

Hariharalaya, the palace of the god who is half Siva (Hari) and half Visnu (Hara), is today called Roluos. This god became popular in Cambodia in the seventh and eighth centuries. Some statues of Harihara are also found in Java, but from a later era. After spending brief periods at Angkor and on the Kulen Plateau,

Jayavarman II set up his palace in this vicinity. Preliminary research at a site called Banteay suggests it may have been located there. Early in the reign of Jayavarman II a dam was built which is now the south dike of the Lolei *baray*. It was not an efficient system, so two perpendicular banks were added.

The next ruler of Hariharalaya after Jayavarman III was King Indravarman I (877–889). His relationship to Jayavarman III is unknown. His father was King Prithivindravarman, who is otherwise unknown. He donated resources to endow the new *baray*, which was named Indratataka after him. After his improvement, the *baray* measured 3,800 by 800 meters, a hundred times larger than any previous such feature in Cambodia. It was he who inaugurated the tradition of building enormous *baray* near the capital.

## PREAH KO

Two years after becoming king, Indravarman I dedicated Preah Ko, a group of brick towers, to Jayavarman II and his wife represented by Siva and Devi, and his own parents and maternal grandparents (an indication of the importance of maternal descent among the Khmer nobility). Some of the original plaster covering the brick walls of the buildings is still visible. The shrine contains several important artistic innovations, including naga railings, which became standard decoration for the major shrines at Angkor.

The complex consists of two rows of three towers. The first row is dedicated to the souls of Indravarman's predecessors, another indication of the continuing importance of reverence for ancestors in the Classic period. The central tower is dedicated to Siva, who is called the divine "associate" of Jayavarman II. Three statues of Nandi in the courtyard of the first enclosure may have given the complex its modern name (*Preah Ko* means "sacred bull"). The north tower is dedicated to Indravarman; the south tower is allocated to his father. Three shorter towers in the second row are dedicated to former queens. Indravarman's connection with Jayavarman II and the queens is not specifically mentioned. Indravarman may have been attempting to compensate for lack of a royal pedigree. Probably he was not recognized as a true noble, and thus had to make special efforts to link himself to that line.

In addition to Lolei and Preah Ko, one other important structure at Hariharalaya is Bakong. The original structure here was built around the time of Jayavarman II. Despite his express wish to free the descendants of Kambu from Java, this shrine may have been modeled on Borobudur in Java, with receding terraces and stairways on each side leading to the main sanctuary at the top. In 881, Indravarman added a royal *lingga* on top of the pyramid and named it Indresvara.

The main shrine was surrounded by canals and moats. Little of the first stage of the monument survives. It was a single temple on a pyramid surrounded by eight brick towers at ground level. The second level was decorated with beautiful reliefs like Borobudur, but only one has survived intact. The shrine now standing on the summit was built in the eleventh century. The first state had perspective effects, but these were hidden by the addition of entrance pavilions as at Borobudur, where these perspective effects were perhaps seen as too Hindu. Further repairs were carried out in the thirteenth century.<sup>151</sup>

At Roluos, fundamental Khmer architectural models became established such as the use of false stories, end tiles, and perspective effects. Bakong is the first enormous stepped pyramid built to support a royal *lingga*. Many future kings of Angkor imitated this example.

Indravarman's son and successor Yasovarman I became raja in 889 and built an island in the middle of the Indratataka now called Lolei to commemorate his ancestors, especially Indravarman. Around 890, Yasovarman I moved his residence from Hariharalaya to Angkor.<sup>152</sup> The monuments at Roluos were not completely abandoned; some renovations were made around 950.

It is Yasovarman I who should be considered the true founder of Angkor. The Angkorian period should rightfully be considered to begin in 890, not 802.

## PRE-BAGAN MYANMAR: SRI KSETRA AND TAGAUNG

Several sites in Myanmar became important during the Early Classic. Artifacts such as silver coins, finger-marked bricks, and jar burials suggest that these sites had already been occupied in the Proto-classic. This section focuses on two important sites, Tagaung and Sri Ksetra, which are known from archaeological excavations and texts. They mark the transition of Myanmar from the Early Classic to the establishment of a central polity, Bagan, in the Middle Classic. Limited archaeological excavations have been carried out at Sri Ksetra and Tagaung. A few radiocarbon dates are available for Sri Ksetra, but none for Tagaung. In addition to the limited sample size, the context of the carbon samples collected (usually listed as the bottom of a layer or from a potsherd) is often not well documented.

## TAGAUNG: THE POLITY OF THE NORTH

Tagaung is located on the east bank of the Ayeyarwadi River, north of Halin in Upper Myanmar.<sup>153</sup> The name means “drum ferry” in Shan.<sup>154</sup> The *Tagaung Yazawin* (Tagaung Chronicle) provides a folk etymology which suggests that *ta kaung* may be derived from the Myanmar term for counting non-human creatures, such as animals or *naga*. The chronicle states that the “kingdom of Kamboja Thintawe is known as Tagaung because there was but one Naga”.<sup>155</sup> The date of composition of the *Tagaung Chronicle* is not known, but it predates the *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi* (“Glass Palace Chronicle”) since the *Hmannan*'s introduction refers to the Tagaung Chronicle as an early work.

An earlier work, Shin Thilawuntha's *Yazawingyaw* (“Celebrated Chronicle”), compiled in 1516 or 1520, does not mention Tagaung. The site entered Myanmar historical discourse in the early eighteenth century. The *Hmannan Yazawindawgyi*, compiled in 1829 following the first Anglo-Myanmar War, is one of three main chronicles of Myanmar history; the other two are U Kala's *Mahayazawingyi* (“Great Chronicle”, circa 1720) and Twinthin Taikwun Mahasitthu's *Yazawinthat* (“New Chronicle”, circa 1798). In all three chronicles the accounts of Tagaung precede the descriptions of *Dhammasoka* (Asoka of Maurya) and Sri Ksetra (*Tharehkettara*).

The publication of the *Hmannan* propelled Tagaung into a central role in the foundation narrative of what became modern Myanmar. The phrase *Myanmar asa, Tagaung ka* (“Myanmar originates from Tagaung”) assumed importance after the mid-nineteenth century. Many twentieth-century accounts of Myanmar history perpetuate the view that Tagaung predated Bagan and Sri Ksetra.<sup>156</sup> Accounts of

Tagaung, Sri Ksetra, and Bagan in the Myanmar chronicle tradition are replete with semi-legendary figures, most of whom are probably tropes constructed by the compilers to provide a continuous instructive historical narrative of ancient Myanmar. Semi-mythological personalities included the twin brothers, Mahathambhawa and Sulathambhawa, who were the legitimate heirs of Tagaung; Dwattabaung, the founder of Sri Ksetra; and Pyusawhti who saved Bagan from the four great enemies: the giant squirrel, giant bird, giant wild boar, and giant tiger.

G.H. Luce, a doyen of Myanmar studies, who lectured at the University of Yangon in the 1930s, suggested that Myanmar began with Kyaukse, not Tagaung.<sup>157</sup> Earlier studies on Tagaung in the 1960s and at least one report in 1993 also rejected the view that Tagaung preceded Bagan and Sri Ksetra.<sup>158</sup> Than Shwe's 1993 report provides site plans of the Tagaung excavations, illustrations of Buddhist reliefs, sculpture, and votive tablets, and other artifacts, including stamped and impressed pottery, tobacco pipes (most likely dating to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), and stone beads. Than Shwe dated the site to the Bagan period; he concluded that Tagaung does not predate Bagan's King Anawrahta's reign (1044–1077). The report describes some "Pyu" artifacts found on the surface, but because they lacked context, Than Shwe and his team abstained from asserting that "Pyu" objects were found there.

More recent archaeological research carried out in Tagaung in 2003 and 2004 arrived at completely different conclusions regarding the dating of the site. The excavations yielded artifacts which the Myanmar researchers identified as "Pyu"; Myanmar scholars began asserting that Tagaung was the first capital and polity of Myanmar, predating Sri Ksetra. They also suggested that Tagaung was an important "Pyu" city. The results of the 2003 and 2004 excavations have been published in two books by an amateur archaeologist, Khyit San Win.<sup>159</sup>

The 2003 excavations began when a villager digging a lavatory in a local high school uncovered pottery, including burial urns. This attracted the Myanmar Department of Archaeology, which carried out a series of excavations in the high school as well as nearby villages. They discovered burial urns which contained fragments of bone and ashes, and round bottomed pots and long-necked water vessels. Non-pottery items included shells; copper and bronze objects such as bells, bracelets, rings, lids, swords, and a spoon; iron artifacts included bracelets, brackets and rivets; a gold plate, gold and silver ornaments, and terracotta, bone, and semi-precious stone beads.<sup>160</sup>

Artifacts were also recovered from the villages of Hsin Nyat Goun and Puti Phyu and the town of Kyan Hnyat in the Tagaung vicinity. These objects included stone tools, terracotta roof tiles, finger-marked bricks, pottery, beads, bronze and iron tools, and remains of iron furnaces. The lack of stratigraphic contexts associated with the artifacts constitutes a major problem for dating these objects and the site. The potential age of objects ranges from stone tools (possibly prehistoric or Neolithic) to roof end and plain tiles which might date to the first or second century CE (by comparison with the Go Cam and Tra Kieu materials),<sup>161</sup> or possibly ninth to tenth centuries for "leaf-like" and floral ones (which resemble tiles from Thang Long Citadel in Hanoi).<sup>162</sup> The objects recovered may have come from different stratigraphic layers, but this information was not recorded.

Several scholars aver that Tagaung was a "Pyu" urban center based on the artifacts recovered from excavations in the vicinity of Tagaung.<sup>163</sup> Nyunt Han (former Director of Archaeology in Myanmar) and Tampawaddy Win Maung argued that Tagaung could be dated to the period between 700 and 300 BCE<sup>164</sup>

based on such evidence as the finger-marked bricks, findings of “Pyu” artifacts, hypothetical dating of earthenware pottery, and much later textual sources.

The stamped earthenware of Tagaung presents an interesting typological problem because the decorative motifs as well as the stamped reversed moulding technique are atypical of known “Pyu” stamped pottery from other sites such as Beikthano, Halin, and Sri Ksetra. The motifs and reversed moulded decorations also differ from pottery found in Bagan and Twante, circa fifteenth century. The stamped earthenware pots in Tagaung may be an indicator of localized and innovative pottery production. Whether this set of data suffices to place Tagaung apart from the “Pyu” centers and Bagan cannot be conclusively determined until more research is carried out.

The architecture of Tagaung comprises several brick temple ruins and the walls on three sides, with the Ayeyarwadi River forming the fourth side. This resembles the shape and layout of the wall of Bagan. Some Myanmar scholars have hypothesized that Tagaung used to have a fourth, or west, wall which must have been obliterated by the Ayeyarwadi River.<sup>165</sup> They also assume that Tagaung belongs to the category of “Pyu” cities based on artifacts. If Tagaung did indeed have a fourth wall, it would have resembled Halin, with its elongated quadrangular-shaped wall with rounded corners. However, as pointed out in “Walled settlements in Myanmar’s dry zone”, Chapter 4, the walls of “Pyu” or Protoclassic sites are not entirely similar. This is not the only instance in which Myanmar researchers have argued that changes in river courses have transformed the shapes of walls. A similar suggestion has also been made regarding Bagan, but in Bagan’s case, there is no evidence that the site predates the late ninth or early tenth centuries.

Other archaeological remains found in the vicinity of Tagaung are furnaces where iron was smelted and forged. The prevalence of iron smelting in the area provides one explanation why Tagaung became an important settlement during the Early Classic. Powerful blacksmiths feature prominently in Myanmar chronicles. One important story linking Tagaung and Bagan is the account of a blacksmith *nat*, Maung Tin De, who was executed by the Tagaung king because he posed a threat to the throne. Maung Tin De’s prowess is described as being derived from iron working. The supernatural power of blacksmiths is another common trope in Seasian mythology.<sup>166</sup>

## EARLY CLASSIC SRI KSETRA

Further systematic archaeological research at Sri Ksetra may reveal that it functioned as an important site during the Protoclassic. Sri Ksetra has structures and artifacts which dated to the Early and Middle Classic. Buildings associated with the Early Classic are found in the southern part of Sri Ksetra within and outside the walls. Important architectural remains include one stupa and three temples. The stupa is the Bawbawgyi, a slightly bulbous, simultaneously slight cylindrical-shaped shrine with a solid core approximately 46 meters high built on a series of terraces (Figure 5.4). Another important stupa is the Hpaya Gyi, located outside the northeast wall. The Hpaya Gyi differs from the Bawbawgyi: it has a bell shape and is less symmetrical. Another similar stupa is the Hpaya Ma. None of these three stupas was replicated in other Myanmar sites; a stupa in Bagan, which has been tentatively dated to the ninth to





**Figure 5.4** Bawbawgyi stupa, Sri Ksetra

twelfth centuries,<sup>167</sup> bears the closest resemblance to a cross between the Bawbawgyi and Hpaya Gyi. This stupa, Nga Kywe Nadaung, has an external layer of glazed bricks, which does not appear on the Sri Ksetra structures.

The first of the notable temples is Bebe, a square building with an interior shrine housing a seated Buddha flanked by two disciples carved on a stone slab placed within an arched niche. The Buddha is depicted in the *bhumisparsa mudra* (gesture symbolizing the conquest of the demon Mara and dispelling illusion). The façade of the temple has false doors and pilasters.

Laymyethna (literally “four faces”) is located in a compound surrounded by a moat. Inside the building is a corridor which runs around a square central core. In each face of this solid core is a niche which contains a seated image of the Buddha. In this respect, Sri Ksetra art is related to the Buddha images of Arakan (Vesali).

Another temple is the Yahantha Gu, or “hermit’s cave”, a long, narrow building with entrances on three sides: one at each end, and one on the east side. A corridor runs lengthwise and is vaulted; two long stone slabs decorated with images of eight Buddhas are placed along the west wall. The structure was constructed in the general location of an earlier sacred site: burial urns and Protoclassic artifacts were discovered in the vicinity.<sup>168</sup>

While the stupas were built during the seventh to ninth century, the brick temples were most likely built during the Bagan period (tenth through fourteenth centuries). In terms of scale and height, the

Bagan-period structures pale in comparison to the massive stupas of Bawbawgyi, Hpaya Gyi, and Hpaya Ma, but as demonstrations of continuity in the use of sites from Protoclassic through Early and Middle into the Postclassic, they represent good examples of how centers such as Sri Ksetra and even Tagaung, continued to function over a long span of time. The form, size, and utilization of space may differ, but the sites remained in use, most likely by a mixture of indigenous as well as immigrant populations.

Other important architectural features in Sri Ksetra are the gates in the surrounding walls. According to the *Mahayazawingyi* by U Kala, Sri Ksetra is an ideal city, with 32 main gates and 23 small ones.<sup>169</sup> Chinese records described 12 doorways;<sup>170</sup> two have been excavated (Shwedagar Gate in the west and Lulinkyaw Gate in the southwest) in the 1960s. Nagatwaint Gate is another gate which is visible today, and was excavated on two separate occasions in the early 1970s and 1990s. The gates of Sri Ksetra are impressive structures which demonstrate ingenuity in architectural designs. The gates are very similar to those at Beikthano and Halin, and reflect Sri Ksetra's place in the developmental sequence of settlements in Myanmar during the long durée of the first millennium CE. The Lulinkyaw shows improvements, particularly in the strengthening of the rampart.

The 12 gates in Sri Ksetra demonstrate the continuity in architectural design between the Preclassic and Early Classic. Variations have been noted in the designs of the gates among the different "Pyu" sites. The main architectural features of the Early Classic stupas did not continue in the Bagan period or in other parts of Myanmar. The temples in Sri Ksetra were probably mostly constructed between the tenth and fourteenth centuries when the Bagan Empire extended south to Tanintharyi in the Siam-Malay Peninsula.

Perhaps the most important architectural innovation in Sri Ksetra during the Early Classic period was the invention of the true arch and vault. In Seasia, true arches and vaults were only found in Myanmar until they were introduced to Ayutthaya in the fourteenth century. There are very few arches and vaults in India; in Sri Lanka, they only appeared in the twelfth century. There are also some at early Bagan; an example is Nat Hlaung Kyaung, a Vaisnavite temple within the walled portion of the site. Chihara suggests that this temple is older than 1057, the year Anawrahta launched his campaign against Thaton. On the basis of true arches and vaults in Sri Ksetra, Chihara refers to them as "fine examples of Pyu radiating arches and vaults".<sup>171</sup>

## REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

The artifacts of Tagaung allow archaeologists to note some interesting connections with other sites in Seasia. The round roof end tiles found in Tagaung resemble the round roof end tiles found in Buu Chau and Tra Kieu in Vietnam; triangular roof end tiles are similar to those found in Thang Long Citadel in Hanoi.<sup>172</sup> If there were indeed connections between these two areas, this would suggest contact over a long span of time since Tra Kieu can be dated to the first quarter of the first millennium. Yamagata alludes to the similarity between what she termed the "happy face" end tiles with others in Nanjing. The roof end tile tradition in China can be dated back to the Zhou dynasty. These tiles, called *wadang* in

Chinese, became very elaborate during the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). The Tagaung tiles, however, are decorated with floral designs, and there is no example of tiles bearing face motifs.

In terms of floral motifs, the Tagaung tiles, both the round and triangular ones, bear greater resemblance to the roof tiles excavated in the Thang Long Citadel in Hanoi. However, that is where the resemblance ends. The Thang Long roof tiles are much more complex.

Another place which produced roof tiles during the Early Classic is Phnom Kulen (Cambodia). Tagaung roof end tiles are somewhat similar to the Phnom Kulen roof tiles in terms of design motifs, but differences exist, especially in the fact that the Khmer tiles are glazed.

Another artifact which is found in Tagaung and also in Bagan is a flat disc-like object. These token-like objects in Myanmar are called *shaqdo*. The same objects have been found in various sites throughout Seasia. Called *gacuk* in Indonesia, examples have also been found in Oc-èo (fifth century), Dieng Plateau, Java (ninth century), Trowulan (fourteenth century), and Singapore (fourteenth century). If the Myanmar scholars' suggested date of eighth century BCE (based on textual sources and circumstantial data such as the "Pyu" artifacts rather than accelerated mass spectrometer [AMS] dating) can be trusted, this would make the Tagaung *shaqdo* the earliest example to have been found in the region. It is, however, too early to jump to such a conclusion. Dating aside, studies of the Myanmar *shaqdo* have larger implications for studying the function and significance of these flat, disc-like objects shaped from ceramics from earthenware to stoneware and porcelain. Further research on *shaqdo* can allow scholars to understand the function as well as the sociocultural and economic importance of these objects in early Seasia. They also point to the importance of the Tagaung archaeological data for the larger Seasian context.

## SUMMARY

The characterization of Tagaung and Sri Ksetra as "Pyu" is not just a dating problem; it is connected to the question of ethnicity and its role in early Myanmar and Seasia in general. As various scholars have proposed,<sup>173</sup> ethnicity has been an important concern among early Seasians, but the way Seasians perceive ethnicity changes according to time and context. "Pyu" remains a problematic concept. In terms of Tagaung, the categorization of Tagaung, Sri Ksetra, and Halin as "Pyu" is useful for comparative studies at one level, but must be problematized. There is a problem in using ethnolinguistic categories such as "Pyu" to refer to peoples who inhabited sites between the first and ninth centuries. They probably came from a variety of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

At this stage of research, it is important to view Sri Ksetra, Tagaung, and Bagan as local sequences which may or may not be related.<sup>174</sup> An example of a local sequence: a site occupied for a long period, as much as 2,000 years. A local sequence is usually defined on the basis of pottery studies, and divided into a series of phases. Each site has a local sequence defined by a set of variables (burial practices, coins, ceramics, writing, and architecture). Sri Ksetra and Tagaung are localities which appear to have had two phases: one conventionally termed "Pyu" and a later one referred to as "Bagan" with no burial urns and coins, and different types of pottery, writing systems, and architecture. Scholars who define Sri

Ksetra and Tagaung as “Pyu” assume all these features are correlated even if fewer than all four of these elements are actually recovered. The limited stratigraphic information from excavations in the “Pyu” sites reduces the level of confidence any researcher can assume regarding the dating and chronological sequence of the artifacts excavated. The assumption that specific artifacts were produced only by specific ethnocultural groups or used by the same groups is tenuous.

An alternative hypothesis is to characterize “Pyu” and Bagan as two separate traditions which may or may not be related to each other. A “tradition” can be defined as a (primarily) temporal continuity represented by persistent configurations in single technologies or other systems of related forms.<sup>175</sup> A tradition may cover several geographical units.

The presence of paddle-marked pottery in both Sri Ksetra and Tagaung may show some kind of link with Bagan. However paddle-marked pottery at Sri Ksetra and Tagaung is rare compared with Bagan. They could have been deposited during the Bagan period as both sites continued to be used into the Bagan period. The question is whether paddle-marked pottery began first in Sri Ksetra and Tagaung and spread to Bagan. This question cannot yet be answered because of the absence of good stratigraphic data.

Another hypothesis would be to define “Pyu” as a horizon.<sup>176</sup> However, this does not appear to be an appropriate concept for this case because there seems to have been a difference in decorative motifs and possibly forms between the two supposed Pyu sites. Another hypothesis can be based on this information: that the differences in pottery decoration resulted from geographical differences, perhaps even cultural differences.

Several questions should be asked regarding the transition between the Early Classic (“Pyu”) and the Middle Classic (Bagan) periods. These are: What connects the so-called “Pyu” sites? Was there indeed a “Pyu” horizon which lasted for a long period from first/second century through the ninth century? Sri Ksetra and Tagaung have significant differences in pottery but similar practices such as use of burial urns and coins which could be identified as traits of a loosely defined “Pyu” interaction sphere. If we include the other “Pyu” sites discussed in “Walled settlements in Myanmar’s dry zone”, Chapter 4, the variations become greater. It would appear that the Pyu cultural entity was marked by some broad similarities, but many local variations on a few themes.

## **WALLED SETTLEMENTS IN LOWER MYANMAR AND ARAKAN: SUVANNABHUMI AND VESALI**

In addition to better-known sites associated with “Pyu” culture, there were probably close to a hundred other walled sites in Myanmar belonging to different chronological periods. A number of these were probably established in the Early Classic. Research on these sites is still in a nascent stage; none of the sites described in this chapter has been systematically excavated. Dating of these sites can only be suggested on the basis of comparison with artifacts found in both archaeological and non-archaeological contexts, stylistic similarities with better-known sites, and assumptions partly predicated on limited textual evidence. The proposed dating of these sites is at best preliminary and subject to change.

## LOWER MYANMAR: SUVANNABHUMI

Lower Myanmar was referred to as *Suvannabhumi*, the “Land of Gold” in Protoclassic texts. Recent research in Muttama (Martaban) and Thaton has provided some general observations about site features such as the shapes of walled enclosures.

Little research has been undertaken in the Kyauktan area southeast of Yangon or the Twante area in the delta southwest of Yangon beyond studies of pottery production sites of the Late Classic. Similarity between the “stencilled fig-leaf pattern” decoration from Khabin near Twante and pottery excavated in Thagara, Dawei, suggests that they might predate the pottery produced in the region during the Post-classic.<sup>177</sup> It is also possible that the pattern continued to be used by potters in more recent times. It is difficult to construct a chronology of earthenware production in most of Seasia because motifs and decoration techniques such as paddle-impressing and stamping were utilized over a long period.

Laterite, an iron- and aluminium-rich soil, is a common mineral in Lower Myanmar, where it was used as building material for temples and other structures. Research on early sites in Lower Myanmar tends to associate specific ethnic cultural groups with use of specific materials; this has led to problematic assumptions such as the association of laterite sculptures and architectural structures with Mon people. This assumption has been used as evidence for Mon construction at sites near Syriam, Twante, and Zokthok, and for that matter most of the settlements in Lower Myanmar, during the Early Classic.

Several sites of this type exist near Bago. One of these, Kyontu, is located about 35 kilometers northeast of Bago and east of Lagunbyee, one of the 32 *myo* (towns) of Hanthawati-Taungngu. The settlement had a wall composed of a laterite core with a brick exterior. Architectural features, including medallions decorated with low-relief human and animal figures at the base of a temple platform, have been compared with early eighth-century art at Kanchipuram, India.<sup>178</sup> Textual traditions suggest that Bago was established in the first millennium CE. Structures now visible at Bago, however, date from the sixteenth century.

In the vicinity of the Sittaung River are several sites which were probably in use during the Protoclassic and Early Classic. Kyaikkatha is the largest walled settlement located in this laterite region. It is situated at the mouth of the Sittaung River and had an enclosed area of 375 hectares, an elite compound, a raised laterite area, and a partially man-made lake.<sup>179</sup> Artifacts found in the site included coins bearing conch and *srivatsa* motifs, beads and glass, earthenware, finger-marked bricks, stupas constructed of laterite, and decorative terracotta plaques and green glazed wares which are more characteristic of the Middle and Late Classic. The walls of Kyaikkatha were constructed with a combination of earth, laterite, and brick. Buildings comprised both laterite and brick structures, including some which were constructed using both types of materials. The central building is the Kyaikkanon Zedi, a stupa constructed on plastered terraces. Laterite features include a block of nine cells named Moat Hsoe Ma Gu, rumoured to be the residence of a Cambodian princess betrothed to a Bago prince. The Myanmar Department of Archaeology excavated seven sites in Kyaikkatha; one of these was Kyo Bin Kon Kyaung, where a cache of silver coins was recovered as well as a collection of five bronze Buddha images dated to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by stylistic analysis. These Buddha images resemble those from Haripunjaya or late Sukhothai.<sup>180</sup>



Near Kyaikkatha are two other walled sites: Sittaung and Kaw Htin. Sittaung, 15 kilometers northwest of Kyaikkatha, covers 75 hectares. The earthen ramparts of the site formed an irregular shape and are partitioned down the middle. Kaw Htin is a small site with an area approximating 9 hectares. It has a series of three to five outer walls with narrow moats.<sup>181</sup> Only informal surveys have been carried out in these sites.

Kelasa is a mountain east of the Gulf of Muttama north of the Thanlwin (Salween) River. One stupa on the mountain is named after the mountain; another is Mya Thabeik. Finger-marked bricks have been found on the summit of this mountain. Two more sites located at its base are Winka and Ayetthema.<sup>182</sup> At Winka are laterite blocks bearing motifs of peacocks, lions, and bodhisattvas. Prehistoric stone tools have also been found at the site. Ayetthema is a promontory with walls enclosing a stupa, Myatheindan Zedi. Myanmar archaeologists under the supervision of Myint Aung carried out excavations in Ayetthema and Winka in 1975 and 1976. Near Mount Kelasa is Thaton, a rectangular walled site with possible rounded corners. Thaton plays a major role in the legend of Bagan's early King Anawrahta. He is said to have conquered Thaton in order to acquire its library of Buddhist literature. Only one preliminary excavation had been conducted in Thaton, yielding a few potsherds. Finger-marked bricks were recovered from the site. There is no conclusive evidence to suggest that finger-marked bricks were produced only in a specific time frame; the fact that finger-marked bricks were found in various sites throughout Myanmar, including the Middle Classic capital of Bagan, suggests that the bricks could have been made over a long span of time. The extant art and architecture of Thaton can be dated between the ninth and eleventh centuries based on style. These included the Shwezayan, which some date to the fifth century. Reliefs on nearby buildings can be dated to the ninth to the eleventh centuries. Sema stones found in the Kalyani ordination hall have been preliminarily dated to the twelfth to thirteenth centuries based on similarities with those found in northern Thailand. Textual sources such as later chronicles and the Kalyani inscription commissioned by King Dhammaceti (reigned 1472–1492) date the site to the mid-first millennium.

A walled site on the lower Thanlwin (Salween) River, near Muttama (Martaban) may have been Kalasapura ("City of Jars"), described in a Sanskrit inscription from Sri Ksetra and contemporary Chinese sources.<sup>183</sup> South of Muttama and Mawlamyine are more sites located on the Tanintharyi (Tenasserim) coast. At Thagara 11.6 kilometers north of Dawei (Tavoy), burial urns, glass beads, and finger-marked bricks were recovered. The old city of Thagara was established on a mound, partially enclosed by two oval-shaped walls which followed the contours of the mound, and might have been shaped by the flooding of the Dawei River. On the mound are two inner quadrangular walls which enclose several brick structures. The site was occupied over a long period, so attempts at dating the structures may be complicated. The brick buildings might well be dated to the Middle Classic (if Thagara were a frontier fortified town established during Anawrahta's reign) and extending into the Late or even Postclassic as a satellite of more recent polities, such as Bago or Taungngu. Some preliminary excavations in 2001 exposed the brick structures but did not include any dates.

Mokti, on an elevated ridge 8.4 kilometers south of Dawei, is a rectangular walled site with multiple walls on the east, north, and south sides. Finds at Mokti included stone sculptures such as a sandstone Ganesa image, a sandstone torso, and intricately decorated lower body of a deity or attendant. Moore



suggested that the Ganesa dates to the Bagan period, but provided no specific time frame for the other images; the other sandstone image can be Early or Middle Classic. Mokti and Thagara functioned over a long span of time, possibly from the Early Classic through the Middle Classic, explaining the range of artifacts.

Limited excavations at the Lower Myanmar sites have yielded similar types of artifacts and other parallels. Further exploration will show whether these similarities are sufficient to group them as a single archaeological culture. The irregular outlines of the walls could have resulted from the natural contours and the activity of the rivers, creeks, and streams in the vicinity which shaped the earthen embankments, providing some naturally higher ground or drainage channels, which the inhabitants utilized and extended. Coins from Lower Myanmar bear a selection of different motifs: conch and *srivatsa*, *bhadrapitha* and *srivatsa*, rising sun and *srivatsa* designs. Coins containing conch and *srivatsa* motifs are found in Lower Myanmar, a number of “Dvaravati” sites in Thailand, Vietnam, and Bengal. *Bhadrapitha* and *srivatsa* coins were found in Dawei (Tavoy) and southern Thailand, and rising sun and *srivatsa* coins were discovered in Nakhon Si Thammarat in southern Thailand.<sup>184</sup> This very broad distribution disqualifies them from being identified with a specific archaeological culture. They do indicate a sphere of interaction.

## THE WESTERN LITTORAL: VESALI AND DHANYAWADI

Two walled sites in Arakan spanned the Preclassic and Early Classic: Dhanyawadi and Vesali. One excavation was conducted in Dhanyawadi between 2003 and 2004, and several excavations have been undertaken in Vesali in the 1980s which revealed architectural structures such as a Buddhist ordination hall, monastery, and a building which might have been a shrine with a bull, possibly Nandi, on a pedestal.<sup>185</sup> These structures were likely contemporaneous with the fifth- to ninth-century artistic tradition found in Sri Ksetra. A “Pyu” language inscription has purportedly been found near Sandoway (Thandwe) in Rakhine, indicating links between western and central Myanmar sometime during the Preclassic and Early Classic.

Dhanyawadi predated Vesali and like Vesali, which was established sometime during the sixth century, contained a central enclosure described as a citadel and palace. This feature suggests that Vesali could be grouped with Beikthano and Sri Ksetra, though the absence of citadels in Halin and Wadi suggests that there is no uniformity in all the sites. Dhanyawadi has an area of 442 hectares; Vesali’s walls enclosed 702 hectares.<sup>186</sup> Dhanyawadi’s walls comprise an irregular oval shape, and bear some resemblance to the more circular elliptical shape of Sri Ksetra’s settlement walls. Vesali’s settlement walls, though similarly irregular, were more lopsided and resemble Halin’s walls with round corners.

Dhanyawadi, which means “grain-blessed”, has been dated to the late Protoclassic. The site is located between two rivers, Kaladan and Lemro, and can be reached via a creek connected to the Kaladan River.<sup>187</sup> A large proportion of the artifacts found in Dhanyawadi comprise sculptures now in the environs of the Mahamuni shrine, located northeast of the “palace” site. Gutman described these sculptures as influenced by late Gupta art. Unfortunately, most of these images are seriously damaged. One

image bears a script similar to that used by eastern Guptas during the mid-fifth century.<sup>188</sup> Two *lokapala* (guardians of the four directions) are depicted carrying swords. Gutman also argued that during the fifth century, the *lokapalas* also functioned as the guardians of the four quarters of a polity.<sup>189</sup> The dates of Dhanyawadi were largely determined based on the stone sculptures. The poor state of preservation of the images creates uncertainty in the dating, which can be alleviated by systematic archaeological surveys and excavations.

The layout of Vesali settlement is the same as Dhanyawadi, with a central citadel or “palace” area northeast of which is a large temple complex. The similarities between the two sites suggest that both settlements belonged to the same archaeological culture. Perhaps Vesali replaced Dhanyawadi as the primary center of Rakhine complex society in the fifth century, coincidentally the period when Dhanyawadi ceased to be the primate site. Dhanyawadi continued to function through the Middle, Late, and Postclassic. Vesali was excavated seven times beginning in 1980.<sup>190</sup> These excavations focused on mounds and areas in the vicinity of buildings.

Textual sources from Arakan include stone and votive tablet inscriptions. A royal inscription dated to 729 CE attributed to a King Anandacandra provides the names and reigns of 18 kings who might have ruled Dhanyawadi since the fourth century CE. Buddhist inscriptions in Rakhine date from the sixth to the eleventh centuries; Gutman and Hudson assert, based on palaeography, that Rakhine had contact with the Bay of Bengal and southeastern India.<sup>191</sup> The Anandacandra inscription provides a lineage of kings of the Candra dynasty from the fourth to the beginning of the seventh century. The inscription refers to the predecessors of Anandacandra as Mahayana Buddhists, but describes the king’s support of Brahmin priests, and donations of land, musicians, and construction of temples. Later inscriptions, such as the Shit-taung inscription, also describe Anandacandra’s construction and repairs of religious structures and public works, donations of lands, persons, and livestock, and the production of religious texts.<sup>192</sup>

Some notable sculptures from Vesali include a column which bears reliefs on three sides. The piece, now housed in the Mrauk U Museum, bears several motifs including the figure of the river goddess, Ganga, who is depicted holding a flywhisk and standing on her vehicle (*vahana*), a *makara*. On all three sides is the image of an ogre’s face. Another sculpture is a 2-meter tall image of Visnu. The head and two arms are missing; the statue’s identification is based on his two lower hands placed on Cakradeva and Gadadevi. Gutman compared the sculptures to late and post-Gupta works.<sup>193</sup> In addition to Śaivite and Vaisnavite images, Buddha images were found in Vesali, but these are fragmentary. Gutman asserted that they bore similarities to sculptures of northern India and “Pyu” images in Sri Ksetra.<sup>194</sup>

An interesting site, which probably dates from the same period as Vesali, is Selagiri, which yielded a series of reliefs formerly used to adorn the façade of a stupa at the foot of Selagiri hill. These reliefs depict episodes from the Buddha’s life story. One represents the Buddha’s attainment of Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree; another portrays Buddha in the *dharmacakra mudra*, turning the wheel of *dharma* while seated in *pralambapadasana* posture (commonly referred to as the European position). Gutman suggested that these sculptures revealed the influence of Gupta art, especially from northeast India, and were similar to sculptures found in Ajanta, Nalanda, and Dvaravati.<sup>195</sup> The Rakhine sculptures exhibit localizing tendencies.

Coins have also been found in Rakhine, some of which bear the conch and *srivatsa* coins found in Lower Myanmar. Between the fifth and ninth centuries, some coins bore motifs of a seated bull and the name of King Devacandra (circa 454–76).<sup>196</sup> Shwe Zan identified 10 different kinds of coins inscribed with the names of Vesali kings.<sup>197</sup> In the Middle Classic, Rakhine succumbed to attacks from Bagan and became part of the mandala of central Myanmar.

## KEDAH AND SOUTH THAILAND IN THE EARLY CLASSIC

Archaeological sites representing major ports of this period are found in Kedah and Ko Kho Khao. Arabs and Persians used several terms (*Kalah/Kalāh /Killah/Kra*) during the ninth and tenth centuries to refer to the stretch of coastline on the west of the Malay Peninsula from Kedah to Phuket and Takuapa. Indian and Arabo-Persian written sources only provide general descriptions of this area, including the fact that traders from Oman and Siraf went there to meet traders coming from China. Foreign merchants, including many Arabs and Persians, were massacred at Guangzhou in the early ninth century, when the Tang dynasty was in decline. As a result, Muslims from Siraf and Oman “continually sailed to Kalah and Zabag [Sumatra/Java]”.<sup>198</sup>

The seven voyages of Sinbad the Sailor form part of *The Arabian Nights*, a compilation of stories set in the early ninth century during the caliphate of Harun al-Rashid. These are not historical, but they demonstrate that the Arabo-Persian world had incorporated the isthmian area into its romantic vision of the east. In his third voyage Sinbad reached *al-Salahitah* (probably from the Malay word *selat* for “strait”) where sandalwood, a prized commodity, was abundant. On his fourth voyage he reached Kalah, which was governed by a powerful king, and provided camphor, rattan, and lead. On his fifth voyage he reached “the islands of spices and aloes wood”, probably Indonesia.

## THE ISTHMIAN REGION

Some of the Protoclassic ports in the isthmian region persisted and expanded, and some new sites appeared in the Early Classic. Archaeological remains of imported items from China and the Near East are scattered along both the east and west coasts from the Isthmus of Kra to Kedah, but there are concentrations of remains at three sites which sprang to life for a few decades in the ninth century, probably in response to unsettled conditions in China.

### Takuapa

Takuapa lies on the west coast of the Siam-Malay Peninsula in Phangnga Province near the Ten-Degree Channel between the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which provides a clear route between the Straits of Melaka and India. The oldest known Tamil inscription found in Seasia was erected in the

ninth century on a hill about 15 kilometers up the Takuapa River, which forms part of a route across the isthmus to Chaiya and Laem Pho.<sup>199</sup> The inscription was set up by a South Indian merchant guild named Maṇigramām in Old Tamil; it is derived from the Sanskrit words for “merchant guild” (*vanik-grāmam*). Merchant guilds had probably existed in India since the Roman period, but the Maṇigramām only begin to appear in inscriptions in the late ninth or tenth centuries. The Takuapa inscription may be the first evidence of their existence. They had close connections with Christian immigrants from Persia who lived in Kerala. The inscription records the construction of a tank protected by the guild and “the residents of the military camp”.<sup>200</sup> The pond was named *Avani-naranam* after a south Indian king who reigned from 826 to 849.

Statues from about the same period have been found at Kwan Phra Noe and Khao Phra Narai in the Takuapa area, associated with brick ruins. The deities portrayed have not been specifically identified; theories posit that the largest one (which is quite tall, 2.35 meters) is Visnu or Siva. Two kneeling figures are probably devotees. They were almost certainly imported from southern India, to judge from the type of stone and carving style. A spectacular Visnu statue more than 2 meters tall once stood on top of 60-meter-high Phra Noe hill at Takuapa on a laterite foundation that measured 6.35 square meters. The statue is 202 centimeters high, “one of the most impressive and accomplished of all of Seasia’s sculptures-in-the-round”.<sup>201</sup> Stanley O’Connor dated it to the period 650 to 800. An undated Ganesa and some other fragments of statuary have been found on the island of Ko Kho Khao, just off the Takuapa River’s mouth.

In the opinion of one expert, “Takuapa was clearly as cosmopolitan as the great trading ports of Tang China”.<sup>202</sup> This is partly due to the quality of the local sculpture, but more to the quantity and variety of artifacts signifying a once-busy entrepôt. Pottery and other small finds at Takuapa/Ko Kho Khao are closely replicated at the east coast site of Laem Pho, including similar glass cups and bowls from the Persian Gulf vicinity, late Tang dynasty pottery from China, and glass and stone beads from India.<sup>203</sup> Chinese ceramics are found at both sites, but they are three or four times more common at Laem Pho than at Ko Kho Khao. Middle Eastern ceramics at Ko Kho Khao and Laem Pho are rare by comparison with Chinese ceramics, but they represent five different types. Middle Eastern glass is very common, mainly cups and small bowls. A few sherds closely resemble glass found at Fostat in Egypt. A Chinese source of the Song period commented that Arab glass cups are suitable for serving hot wine.

Earthenware pottery from the two sites is similar to that found in central Thailand at the same period, but earthenware at Ko Kho Khao is more varied, and sizes and styles at the two sites also diverge from one another.<sup>204</sup> The environment of Laem Pho is more suitable for agriculture, particularly wet rice growing. Ko Kho Khao seems to have had no hinterland, and its political affiliation is obscure; it may have formed an enclave of South Asian sojourners. In nearby Wiang Sa, the artifact assemblage includes earthenware, imported Chinese pottery of the Tang and Song periods (ninth to thirteenth centuries), an Arab coin dated 882, and Hindu sculpture, including a yoni, Bhairava, Visnu, and Devi statues of the tenth or eleventh century.<sup>205</sup>

Laem Pho was excavated by the Fine Arts Department of Thailand in 1982–83. In the ninth century it was the port of Chaiya, a major religious and probably political center 10 kilometers inland.<sup>206</sup> In addition to ceramic sherds found scattered over an area of 5 square kilometers on the beach of a point

projecting into the sea at the mouth of the Tha Chana River, Surat Thani Province, other finds include pentagonal ponds, brick pedestals, and a wooden rudder at least 8 meters long. Chinese and Persian sherds of the ninth century were found in five excavation squares. One of the most common types of porcelain found at these sites, Changsha ware, has been discovered at sites in the Malay Peninsula, including Sungai Mas, Kedah, and at numerous locations in central Java, from the north coast to the great temples at Dieng, Prambanan, Sojiwan, Sari, and Ratu Boko. Similar ware has been found farther west, in Sri Lanka, Iran, and Kenya (Guy 1990: 11),<sup>207</sup> but in smaller quantities than in Seasia. A huge quantity of this ware (more than 55,000 pieces) was found on the ninth-century Belitung shipwreck in Indonesia.

## Chaiya

The name “Chaiya” is no doubt derived from – *jaya*; and some scholars have suggested that the center of the kingdom known as Srivijaya was located there.<sup>208</sup> This site was also known as Grahi, which in Chinese yielded the transcription *Jia-luo-xi*. It was probably known to the Chinese in the Proto-classic as Panpan.<sup>209</sup> Whereas Takuapa yielded major Brahmanical statues, Chaiya was much more Buddhist. Archaeological sites in Chaiya include four large Buddhist temples made of brick (including Wat Keo, founded around 775, restored in the ninth century; Wat Long; and Wat Phra Borommathat); a Dvaravati-style Buddha head and wheel of the law; an Avalokitesvara, possibly carved in the sixth century, which would make it the oldest statue of Mahayana deity in Seasia;<sup>210</sup> votive tablets; and stupikas. All three sites seem to have been abandoned in the early tenth century, probably because of changing commercial and political variables. A small area at Laem Pho was settled again for a brief time in the late twelfth century.<sup>211</sup> Another site in southeast Thailand, Nagara Sri Dharmaraja (Nakhon Si Thammarat in Thai), rose to prominence, probably taking on Chaiya’s role as a major port for ships coming from the east.

## Langkasuka

The kingdom of Langkasuka appeared in the early seventh century in the *History of the Liang*, which described it as rich, where people wore gold jewellery and their royal citadel was surrounded by a wall with double gates, towers, and pavilions. Chinese envoys on the way to Red Earth Land saw its mountains from their ship. Langkasuka sent ambassadors to China several times in the sixth century but never sent any to the Tang court. This is curious, because it appears in Yijing’s description of Seasia of the late seventh century. Yijing says that several previous Chinese monks travelled there on merchant ships. It is mentioned in the Tamil inscription of Tanjor in 1030 as one of the cities conquered by the attack against Srivijaya in 1025 (*Ilangâśogam*). In 1225 the *Zhu-fan-zhi* recorded it as a dependency of Sanfoqi. In 1293, according to the *History of the Yuan*, the Mongols sent an envoy to “the small countries of Malayu” to deliver an imperial order that the kings send their brothers or sons to China to show their

loyalty to the emperor; it is recorded that they complied. Only *Lochac* (possibly Langkasuka) refused to obey the order; according to Marco Polo, the Yuan were unable to force them to comply.

Malay folklore remembers it well, and implies that its power once reached Kedah on the west coast. When Malaya was about to become independent, one name proposed for the new country was Langkasuka.<sup>212</sup> Langkasuka's long existence is underlined by references to it in the fourteenth-century Javanese poem *Desavarnana*. In the fifteenth century it is mentioned in Arab texts and an Ayutthayan text as a Siamese dependency. Its center was probably located near Yarang, south of Patani, where the Ming *Wubeizhi* map marks it.<sup>213</sup> In 1989 The Fine Arts Department of Thailand began excavations there. A total of 33 sites were recorded in an area covering 3.5 by 1.8 kilometers. The sites cluster in three areas: Ban Wat, Ban Jalæ, and Ban Prawæ, 15 kilometers inland at the inland edge of the Patani River Delta where remains of canals (to keep navigation viable) and drainage channels, some possibly ancient, can be seen. Extensive ramparts and numerous ruins of brick structures, probably Buddhist sanctuaries, some with stucco decoration usually associated with sites of the Protoclassic and the beginning of the Early Classic, are found there. Huge quantities of clay stupikas, votive tablets, and a limited amount of Buddhist and Brahmanical statuary, including two linggas, have been recovered. Sassanid silver coins of the fifth century have been found, but no report on the ceramics of the site is yet published.<sup>214</sup>

### The Ligor inscription

The Ligor stone was found at an unknown spot in the Nakhon Si Thammarat area. It is inscribed on two sides. Face A has 29 lines of Sanskrit text dated 775 CE and mentions a king of Srivijaya who built temples for Buddha, Padmapani, and Vajrapani (two esoteric Buddhist deities) and his chaplain Jayanta, who built three stupas. Two more were erected by the chaplain's disciple. The other side may be somewhat later,<sup>215</sup> and bears four lines which say that "he is the supreme king of kings . . . [comparable to Visnu and Krisna, killer of vain enemies] called Sri Maharaja because it is said that his origin is the Sailendravangsa."<sup>216</sup> It then breaks off in mid-sentence. Who "he" was will forever be a mystery. Face A is important because it is the only record of the name Srivijaya in the Malay Peninsula. It is also the last time the name appeared in any local text.

### Chitu, the Red Earth kingdom

Chitu, the Red Earth kingdom, is described in detail in early Chinese sources, because two envoys from the Sui Dynasty visited it in 608. It was south of Langkasuka (Patani). The capital was called Singapura, and had walls with "triple gates" painted with Buddhist designs, guarded by female soldiers. "It is the custom to worship the Buddha but greater respect is paid to the brahmanas." Corpses were cremated over water, but the king's ashes were collected in a golden jar and put in a temple. Chitu seems to have declined after the envoys' visit.<sup>217</sup> It may have been the home port of Captain Buddhagupta, who had a stele carved in fifth-century Kedah.



## Dandan

The kingdom of Dandan is only known from Chinese sources. Its location is very uncertain; it could be anywhere around modern Terengganu or Kelantan on the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, or in Java.<sup>218</sup> It sent missions in 530 CE which brought appropriately fine tribute, including ivory images, pearls, perfume, and medicine. At least two more missions came in the early Tang period (seventh century).

## KEDAH: SOUTHERN KALAH

Buddhist votive tablets from the Early Classic have been found in several caves along the west coast south of Takuapa.<sup>219</sup> At the southern end of the range of limestone hills which provided fitting places for Buddhist hermits is the largest rice-growing area in Malaysia: the Kedah plain, which stretches for 50 kilometers to Kedah Peak, a major navigational landmark at the north end of the Straits of Melaka, which signalled the availability of fresh water from the Muda and Merbok Rivers on its south side. Various versions of the name appear in the seventh through tenth centuries in Chinese (*Jiecha*) and Indian sources (*Kataha*, *Kadaram*, *Kidara*). Important inscriptions, temples, and trading ports lie at such sites as Pengkalan Bujang, Sungai Mas, Bukit Meriam, and Candi Bukit Batu Pahat in a large estuary south of the mountain, where ships could replenish water and food supplies, and shelter from storms. This was probably the home port of many ships plying the Bay of Bengal. According to Tamil sources, Kedah was one of the two centers of the kingdom of Srivijaya in 1025 when the Chola conquered Kedah and took its king, Sanggramavijayottungavarman, to India, along with his treasures, after which he disappeared from history.

Kedah was already prominent in the Protoclassic; in the Early Classic, it continued to prosper. Yijing says that Kedah was the port from which ships left Seasia for India. He sailed directly from there to Tamralipti in Bengal; others went to Nagapattinam in southeast India. On his return voyage he mentioned that Kedah “was now Srivijaya”. We do not know what it meant to “be Srivijaya”. Historians have assumed that this meant Kedah was ruled from Srivijaya’s capital. There is no evidence to confirm this inference. Indian sources paid much greater attention to Kedah than to Srivijaya, both before and after Yijing’s voyages. Kedah may have become incorporated into a larger mandala along with Malayu in Jambi and Srivijaya, but retained considerable autonomy.

While Srivijaya is known from early Chinese sources, Kedah is first mentioned in Indian literature. A Tamil poem entitled *Pattinappalai*, written in the first few centuries CE, depicts frequent commerce between India and Kalamgam, usually understood to mean Kedah.<sup>220</sup> The term *Kataha-dvīpa* appears in *Purana* literature earlier than the most common ancient name for Sumatra, that is, *Suvarnadvipa* (“Golden Isle”). *Kataha-dvīpa* refers to one of nine great *dvīpa* into which *Bharatavarsha* or Greater India (the entire world as known to the ancient Indians) was divided. In another ancient Indian compilation of stories, the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, Kataha is depicted as a rich and important country near *Suvarnadvipa*. The stories include one about a princess of Kataha who is cast away near Suvarnadvipa while on her way to India; another about a merchant named Guhasena who sails from Tamralipti to Kataha,

followed by his wife; and a story about a stupid merchant. A man named Candrasvamin went to find his son and younger sister by following them to *Kataha-dvīpa*, *Karpuradvīpa* (“isle of camphor”, possibly northern Sumatra, perhaps Barus), then to Suvarnavdīpa, and finally to *Singhala-dvīpa*.<sup>221</sup>

Chinese sources record that a mission came from *Jia-zha* in 638. At first O.W. Wolters thought that this referred to Kedah, but that Kedah only appeared in the early seventh century, and never occupied a very high position in the political or economic hierarchy. Later he changed his mind and decided that *Jia-zha* did not refer to Kedah at all. Instead he thought it might have been in northeast Cambodia. It is true that the name *Jia-zha* does not appear again. Thereafter Kedah was phonetically rendered with characters which are today pronounced *Jie-cha*. Coedès believes that this transcription is a Sanskrit version of *Kataha*. This Sanskritization may have been performed by Yijing, a Sanskrit expert.<sup>222</sup> Kedah was certainly cosmopolitan. Yijing met a person from central Asia there.<sup>223</sup> A Chinese report preserved in the *Xin Tang shu* says that “Srivijaya is a double kingdom and the two parts have separate administrations.” The “western kingdom” was called Barus.<sup>224</sup> The same record says that Srivijaya had 14 ports. Although the Chinese thought that Barus (northwest Sumatra) was the northern capital, Indian and Arab sources of the eighth to tenth centuries usually call the king of the Straits “the ruler of Srivijaya and Kataha”. Thus they considered Kataha, not Barus, to be one of the two “poles” of Srivijaya.<sup>225</sup> Sometimes the ruler of the Straits was simply called the king of Kataha, for example, in the Larger Leiden Grant (1005).

Archaeology has shown that Kedah was highly significant in the Early Classic and Middle Classic periods. It deserved its fame in India. There is no archaeological evidence of South Sumatran political domination, but it is difficult to imagine that any sort of data other than inscriptions would provide such evidence. It has been speculated that Srivijaya’s main goal was to monopolize maritime trade in the Straits of Melaka, but excavations at the site of Sungai Mas, “Golden River” in south Kedah, have yielded plentiful evidence of trade with China. It is possible that Srivijaya was a mercantile association of ports like the Hanseatic League rather than an autocratic centralized empire.

Sungai Mas yielded one of the three fifth-century inscriptions bearing a local statement about *karma* found in southern Kedah. There are several Early Classic sites in this district, one of which covers at least 20 hectares. Ceramics included locally made items, Chinese, and West Asian products, as well as glass beads and glass fragments, mostly of West Asian origin, including eight probable reject beads signifying local production. Excavations between 1980 and 1991 recovered locally made earthenware, Chinese porcelain of the Tang and Song, West Asian ceramics of the eighth to tenth centuries, a wide range of beads, and fragments of building foundations, some of which may have belonged to a stupa.<sup>226</sup>

Remains of sculpture are scarce in Kedah. Discoveries include some nicely carved pieces of greenish fine-grained stone used as volutes for staircases and a head of Buddha, and an intact standing bronze Buddha, but little else. Remains of at least eight structures attributed to early Buddhist temples from the south Kedah region<sup>227</sup> are spread over a large stretch of coastal lowland extending for 20 kilometers south from Kedah Peak. Other sites of unknown affiliation once stood on the peak itself, and at Bukit Choras, 20 kilometers north of the mountain. Sites have been found up to 15 kilometers up the Muda River. It is clear that the site was Buddhist during the Protoclassic and Early Classic. Isolated bodhi-sattva statues have come to light in Perak, the next state farther south, near old tin mines. A clay tablet

found in south Kedah bears a citation from a text associated with the *Madhyamika* School of esoteric Buddhist thought<sup>228</sup> in the type of script used in the late seventh century in Palembang.

### Kuala Selinsing

There is evidence of a hierarchy of settlement in this region, if Kuala Selinsing 150 kilometers south of Kedah is considered part of the same settlement system. Protoclassic finds on the site were discussed previously. On a mound called Tanjung Rawa in this coastal swamp, a range of artifacts has been discovered including burials, gold jewellery, early Chinese porcelain, and a carnelian seal engraved with the name Sri Visnuvarman. The site was excavated in 1930, and briefly mentioned in 1955.<sup>229</sup> Three occupation levels were discerned. The oldest phase was accompanied by stoneware and glass beads, apparently associated with dugout canoes which may have had outriggers, buried in shell middens as funerary offerings. The dead were apparently interred beneath houses, to judge from the remains of probable house posts.

The second layer included evidence of working of tin, lead, and iron, and processing of imported glass to make beads. Spouted vessels (perhaps kendis) were said to have been common. A few sherds of green glazed Chinese ware, perhaps from the late Tang (ninth century) were also present. Two of the most valuable items recovered were a gold ring depicting Garuda (similar items have been found in Early Classic Java and the Philippines) and the inscribed seal, which probably dates from the seventh century. Some have suggested that it is connected with the king mentioned on the Ligor stele of 775 CE, but this date is too late if the script is seventh century.

## SRIVIJAYA: AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE WORLD

The name *Srivijaya* (Śrīvijaya, Shriwijaya), like much else about Early Classic Seasia, first comes to light in a Chinese source. In this case it is a Buddhist pilgrim, Yijing, who provides our first glimpse of a kingdom which become famous as the overlord of the main waterway between the East and the West in the Early Classic, when international maritime trade reached a level of prosperity and sophistication never seen before.

### Yijing (635–713)

Yijing, a highly connected Buddhist monk, was dispatched by the famous Empress Wu of the newly founded Tang dynasty, a devout Buddhist, to go to India to collect scriptures. He wrote two texts about his travels. One described Buddhism in the South Seas (India and Seasia); the other consisted of biographies of other monks. In 671 BC he sailed from Guangzhou to *Foshih* (Vijaya) on a ship belonging to Vijaya's ruler. He used the six months which he had to spend in Srivijaya waiting for the return of the

east monsoon to study Sanskrit. He mentioned a large monastery in the suburbs of the port where it was possible to obtain an excellent education in Buddhist literature. He then travelled to Nalanda in northeast India via two other ports in the Straits of Melaka (Malayu and Kedah) and spent 18 years there before returning to Srivijaya in 689.

On his return to Srivijaya he mentioned that Malayu and Kedah “were now Srivijaya”. It has been inferred that Srivijaya had subjugated them, but this has never been substantiated. He used the name Srivijaya to refer to most of Sumatra, and says it had 14 cities divided between two *kuo*, or kingdoms, and three *zhou* (geographical regions): Barus, Malayu, and Mukha Asin. The latter seems to have been the Banyuasin estuary between the Musi and Batanghari Rivers.

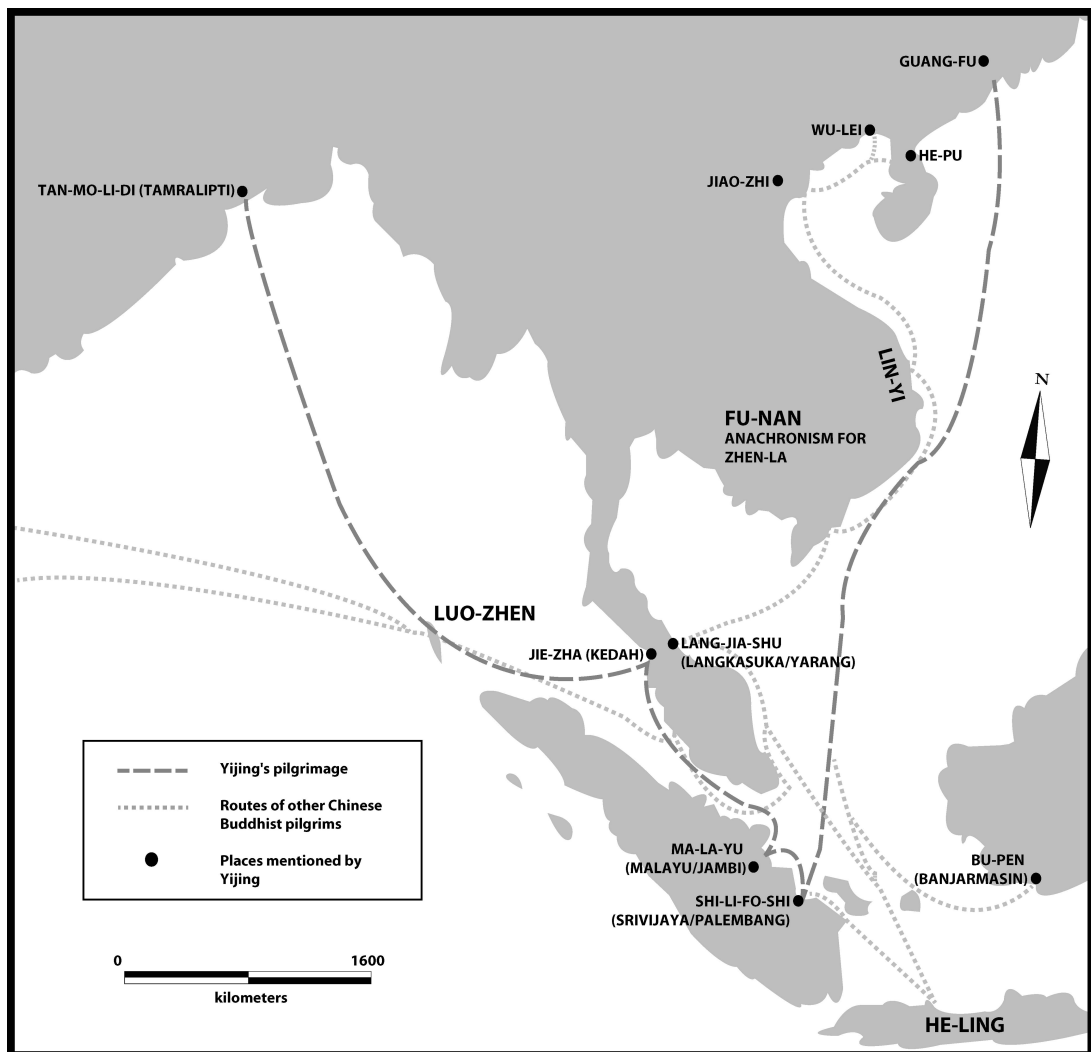


Figure 5.5 Maritime routes of Chinese pilgrims

One day he boarded a ship to enter an order for paper and ink to be brought to him from China. Probably Sumatrans used the leaves of the *lontar* palm tree, traditional Seasian writing material. The ship suddenly weighed anchor before he had time to go ashore, so he was involuntarily carried back to China. He had not yet completed his studies in Srivijaya, so he returned to Srivijaya for a third time (presumably having purchased his writing materials). One of seven great Buddhist masters, Sakyakirti, lived in Srivijaya; probably Yijing wanted to spend more time with him. Yijing returned to China in 695, and spent the rest of his life in the Lesser Wild Goose Pagoda near Xian, the capital of China, translating Sanskrit texts, including Sakyakirti's *Hasandasastra*, into Chinese (Figure 5.5).

## INSCRIPTIONS OF SRIVIJAYA

Although Yijing does not mention the name of Srivijaya's king, we know that between 682 and 686, while Yijing was in India, inscriptions were carved in Srivijaya at the order of King Jayanasa. Three major texts as well as a number of short ones have been found in Palembang. One found at Kedukan Bukit, at the foot of holy Seguntang Hill, refers to a pilgrimage to obtain supernatural power. Another, from Talang Tuwo, 5 kilometers north of Seguntang, records King Jayanasa's meritorious founding of a public park. Oaths of loyalty to the ruler have been found at Sabukingking (otherwise known as Telaga Batu) and Boom Baru in Palembang; Kota Kapur, Bangka; Karang Berahi (Jambi); and two places in Lampung, at Sumatra's southern tip.<sup>230</sup> No such stones have been found in north Sumatra, Java, or the Malay Peninsula.

The script and language used in these inscriptions "mark the beginning of a national language and a script adapted for it".<sup>231</sup> They are written in a local version of Brahmi script similar to that used in Java, and use Old Malay language, with a good number of Sanskrit words. Only 10 major inscriptions (many of which are more or less identical versions of an oath of loyalty) are available from which to piece together a history of Srivijaya. All appear to have been written in the same decade. It is as though only King Jayanasa of all Srivijaya's kings recorded his proclamations on stone. No other Srivijayan kings did so. Because no texts written on perishable materials have survived, we are forced to rely on foreign texts and archaeological data to reconstruct this mandala.

The distance from Palembang to Kedah is 1,100 kilometers. The mandala thus stretched for a long distance. The Karang Berahi oath inscription is more than 200 kilometers inland, so the king's ability to command respect could have extended far inland. The highland-lowland relationship in Sumatra is a complicated issue and will be dealt with in a subsequent discussion.

The first two lines of the oaths have resisted translation. They are not in any known language. Coedès and de Casparis thought it was a secret magical language. Damais advanced the hypothesis that it was a real language of a Sumatran ethnic group but could find no parallels with any. Some south Indian inscriptions also contain indecipherable portions.<sup>232</sup>

The most elaborate oath stone was found on an island in an artificial pond at Sabukingking (Figure 5.6), which is reminiscent of the Seasian practice of making "floating pavilions", *balai kambang*, in palaces. These may have been meant to evoke the image of the king as Visnu reclining on the ocean.





**Figure 5.6** Sabukingking oath inscription. The spout at the bottom was probably intended to capture the imprecation water which would have been drunk by those taking the oath of loyalty after it had been poured over the inscription.

The location is still a site of pilgrimage by local Muslims. The inscription was used in a ceremony in which water was poured over the heads of seven *naga* carved on top of the stone. The water flowed over the words of the oath and into a trough with a spout. The inscription states that if anyone who drank the “imprecation water” ever broke the oath, he would be poisoned by the water of the curse. The practice of “drinking oaths” was common in Seasia until recent times.

The inscription reads in part:

Om! Success! . . . All of you, as many as you are – sons of kings, . . . chiefs, army commanders, confidants of the king, judges, surveyors of groups of workmen, surveyors of low castes, cutlers, . . . clerks, sculptors, naval captains, merchants, . . . and you – washermen of the king and



slaves of the king – all of you will be killed by the curse of this imprecation; if you are not faithful to me, you will be killed by the curse. . . . However, if you are submissive, faithful and straight to me and do not commit these crimes, an immaculate tantra will be my recompense. You will not be swallowed with your children and wives, . . . [E]ternal peace will be the fruit produced by this curse which is drunk by you.<sup>233</sup>

The unusual combination of people of high and low status has been remarked upon by many scholars.

In addition to loyalty oaths, a few other topics appear in Srivijayan inscriptions. The Kota Kapur oath stone adds the detail that the “land of Java” had not submitted to the ruler of Srivijaya, and that when the inscription was carved in 686 CE, the Srivijayan army had just set out on an expedition against Java. No oath stones have been found in Java, so the effect of this expedition is unknown (unless the “Java” mentioned was Lampung).

The Kedukan Bukit inscription records a voyage by the king (*dapunta hiyang*, a Malay title) to obtain *siddhayatra*. He led an army of 20,000 men; 200 accompanied him by ship, and 1,312 met the king after travelling on foot. Srivijaya then became rich.<sup>234</sup>

The meaning of *siddhayatra* is connected to *siddhiyatrika*, “one who makes pilgrimages to learn magical arts or to gain good luck or beatitude”.<sup>235</sup> Coedès translated the term as *puissance magique*.<sup>236</sup> The king made a pilgrimage to a hill; probably this was nearby Seguntang. The *Malay Annals* describes the magical appearance of the first Malay king, Sri Tri Buana, on this hill. During the Srivijaya period, large Buddhist sanctuaries with monumental sculptures were erected there. These were subsequently replaced by Islamic shrines called *keramat*. More than 40 stones with the word *siddhi* carved on them in seventh-century script have been found at Sabukingking, Bukit Seguntang, and Karanganyar in Palembang.

A cult of people identified as *siddha* (“saint or perfected one”) arose among sixth-century devotees of Siva in Kashmir. They were “sorcerers” who by the eighth century had developed texts describing conduct which was normally considered sinful. By the end of the tenth century, *siddha* communities had developed close relationships with Buddhist monasteries.<sup>237</sup> An Old Mon inscription from Saraburi of the sixth or seventh century contains a description of a ruler to a sacred cave on a hill. A tenth-century inscription from Champa says that an official twice conducted *siddhiyatra* to Java. In thirteenth-century Sukhothai, king Ramkhamhaeng conducted a biweekly ritual in which he went from his throne to the sacred hill, Wat Saphan Hin. At Munggir, east Java, 16 stones with *siddhayatra* carved on them were found at a spring. At least two bear the date 1459 CE; another was seemingly meant to mark the boundary of a meditation spot where it was forbidden to fell the forest.<sup>238</sup> The Srivijayan ruler was probably following an ancient Seasian custom, possibly connected with places of ancestor worship on hills, and used a contemporary Sanskrit word to describe it (Figure 5.7).

### Talang Tuwo inscription

The Talang Tuwo inscription, dated 684, was found 5 kilometers northwest of Seguntang in 1920. It commemorates Jayanasa’s pious deed in establishing a park called Sri Ksetra for the benefit of all living

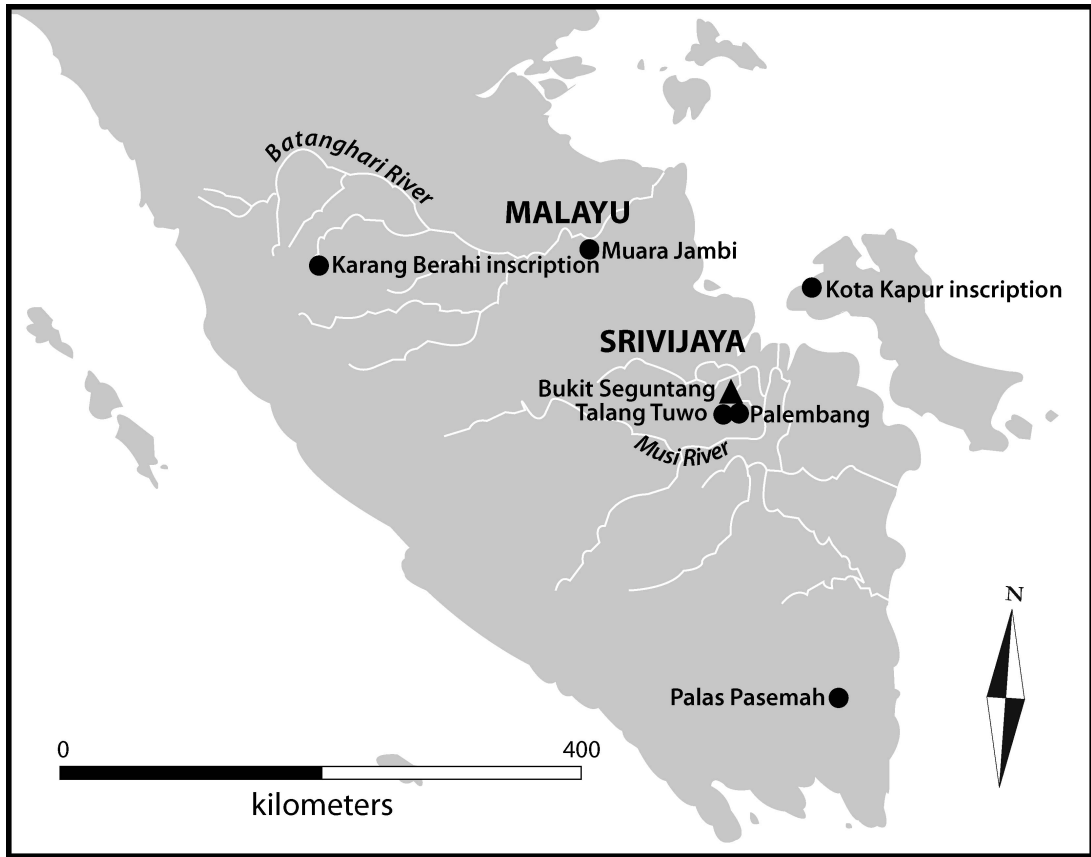


Figure 5.7 Map of Srivijayan inscriptions

beings. Of its 206 words, 117 are Old Malay and 89, or 40 per cent, are Sanskrit.<sup>239</sup> This gives us a good indication of the degree to which Sanskrit had penetrated Srivijaya's court culture.

A condensed version of the inscription follows:

Prosperity! Fortune! In Śaka 606, on the second day of the light fortnight of the month of Caitra; it was at this time that the garden *Śrīkṣetra* was made under the direction of H.M. *Śrī Jayanāśa*. Here is His Majesty's wish: That everything that is planted here, coconut, areca, sugar, sago, the various trees whose fruits can be eaten, as well as bamboos, and the other gardens with dams, ponds and all the good works done by me, may be for the good of all beings. If they are hungry at a halt or on the road, let them find food, and water to drink. May all their clearings and gardens be full (of crops). May their livestock and slaves prosper. May they be assailed by no calamities, nor tormented by sleeplessness. Whatever they do, may all the planets and constellations be favourable to them, and may they be kept from illness and old age during their enterprises. Also, may their servants be faithful and devoted, may their friends not betray them, and may their wives be faithful. Let there

be no robbers, violent men, murderers, or adulterers. May they possess a wise friend; may the thought of Bodhi be born in them . . . and may they not be separated from the Three Jewels. (May they practice) generosity, observance of precepts, patience; may energy, diligence, knowledge of all the arts be born in them, may they possess knowledge, memory, and intelligence. May they be firm in their opinions, and have the diamond body of the *Mahāsattvas*, an unequalled power, victory, and the memory of their former lives, all their senses, a full form, happiness, smiles, calmness, a pleasant voice, the voice of Brahma. May they be born male, able to exist by themselves; may they be the vessel of the marvelous Stone, rejoicing in the mastery of birth, the mastery of the *karman*, the mastery of impurities, and may they finally obtain complete and supreme Enlightenment.<sup>240</sup>

Phrases in this inscription refer to esoteric Buddhist concepts. Inscriptions on small gold plates discovered in Palembang, Java, Bali, contain the *Pratityasamutpadagatha*, that is, the *ye dharma* formula. One was found in 1929 during archaeological excavations near Seguntang Hill: it was inserted in a brick, perhaps once part of a stupa.<sup>241</sup> Arguments continue to flow about the extent to which elements considered Tantric were present in Srivijaya. Dharmapala of Kanchi in the seventh century studied at Nalanda, a cradle of esoteric Buddhism with which Sumatra had strong connections for several centuries. Dharmapala is said to have gone from Nalanda to Suvarnadvipa.<sup>242</sup> There is thus strong evidence for the rapid dissemination of this form of belief in Sumatra.

The kingdom's main religion was Buddhism, but bronze statues of Hindu deities have been found in the Musi River, which flows through Palembang. Hindu shrines have also been excavated further upstream at Tanahabang; they probably date from the Middle Classic, and so will be dealt with in Chapter 6.

## SRIVIJAYA'S CAPITAL

Southeast Sumatra is the best-documented part of the island. Here we can begin to examine processes of change in society and settlement patterns. In this region there have been two historically important centers: Malayu-Jambi and Srivijaya-Palembang, both in similar environments: the inner reaches of estuaries. Yijing did not describe the appearance of the city. We can, however, draw a few conclusions from the little written information we have. Arab geographer Abū Zaid in 916 recorded that the palace of the Maharaja of Zabaj lay on a tidal estuary "like Basra". The *Ajaib al-Hind*, circa 1000, also mentions the sea of Malayu and a large bay, the bay of Sriboza; "there is no other bay so long in all the island, and the flood tide appears every 12 hours." Buzurg described people who lived on rafts and could move their houses at will.<sup>243</sup>

Srivijaya's capital must have looked much the same as Palembang did in the nineteenth century: lines of crowded dwellings along the banks of the Musi and its tributaries, most of them rafts or houseboats, or built on stilts over the river. Seasonal ponds or lakes known as *lebak* are filled by floodwater from the Musi and its main tributaries the Ogan and Komering during the rainy season. These ponds are important seasonal sources of food, including fish and rice.

We would probably never find much evidence of Srivijaya's urban population on land, even if no modern city of a million people had grown on the site. The river's bed has never been explored, but large quantities of artifacts are frequently recovered by local divers and people dredging the river.<sup>244</sup>

The inscriptions found in Palembang contain a number of terms for settlements of various types. One important term is *kadatuan*, meaning "Place of the Ruler". The ruler and his harem lived in a place called *tngah rumah*. In modern Indonesian this could be translated as "middle of the house". An equivalent term used in Java is *dalam*, meaning "inside". This probably meant the inner part of the palace. There were also *desa*, translated as "villages", under control of local *datu*, or chiefs, who lived in *sthana*, similar to the modern Malay word for "palace".

*Vanua Sriwijaya* may mean the palisaded compound of Srivijaya's noble family. Hermann Kulke asserts that *vanua* should be interpreted as "village", which in the Srivijayan context refers to an "agro-urban zone", containing spaces of several types: a *kadatuan*, markets, vihara, fields, and palisaded residential areas.<sup>245</sup> This depiction of the center of power in seventh-century Srivijaya is consistent with the archaeological data, for it does not suggest that archaeological evidence would consist of debris from a congested residential area where manufacture, trade, and other specialized occupations were conducted to the exclusion of agriculture.

No inscriptions are known to have been carved in Srivijaya between the eighth and tenth centuries, except for two in Lampung, which are not very informative, and which have no connection with Srivijaya, so that our knowledge of the kingdom's history during this period of 200 years is based on Chinese and Arab sources and a small amount of archaeological research. It is possible that more inscriptions will be found in the future. A recent expedition to South Sumatra and Jambi discovered nine new or unpublished inscriptions, which increased the number of known documents from the Classic period by more than 10 per cent (from 78 to 87).<sup>246</sup>

## SRIVIJAYA AND CHINA

Srivijaya sent ambassadors to China around 670–673, the time of Yijing's first voyage, but no official record of their visit exists. Possibly Yijing returned to Srivijaya with those envoys. Another mission in 702 CE is the first mentioned in official records. In the eighth century, embassies came from Srivijayan rulers named Sri Indravarman and *Liu-teng-wei-gung*. Vajrabodhi, a south Indian monk who brought Mahayana Buddhism to China, left Sri Lanka in 717 and went to Srivijaya, where "the king received him with the greatest solemnity", and where he stayed five months to wait for the change of the monsoon. In 724 a Srivijayan mission sent by "Crown Prince" Kumara arrived in China.<sup>247</sup>

No Srivijayan missions came for the next 180 years. Probably private trade was continuing, though it was illegal. If Yijing could go back and forth almost casually between Palembang and Guangzhou, there must have been much commercial activity for which no records exist. The Tang dynasty became weaker after the An Lushan revolt of 755–763. An important transfer of power had also occurred in Mesopotamia: the Persian Abbasids defeated the Umayyads, and the caliphs moved their capital from Damascus to Baghdad. The new court derived much of its structure from the earlier Sassanian kingdom.

Tang sources mention that foreign merchants complained about extortionate behavior of Chinese officials. In 758 the Persian and Arab communities jointly sacked the port of Guangzhou, then fled by sea.<sup>248</sup> Just five years later, the reverse fate befell several thousand Persian and Arab merchants living in the port of Yangzhou, in the Shanghai region: anti-Tang rebels destroyed the city and killed thousands of foreigners. In the same year the Tang lost control of the overland Silk Road.

West Asian merchants relocated their operations to Seasia. In 760–761 Arabs made overtures to the Javanese to allow them to set up business there. Hanoi became China's main international port for the rest of the century. It was at this time that ships from Oman met the ships from China in the isthmian region of the Siam-Malay Peninsula. Srivijaya also benefited significantly from the situation, becoming a major destination for West Asian traders. In 878 Guangzhou was sacked again, this time by a rebel Chinese general. The foreign community which had re-established itself there again fled to Kalah.

Whatever its internal arrangements, after Srivijaya appeared, no other polities in the Straits of Melaka sent official missions to China for 150 years. The result was that the center of the kingdom, probably Palembang, became extremely wealthy from its dominance of the diplomatic exchanges with China. These exchanges were formally defined as presentations of tribute from a Seasian vassal and reciprocal gifts from China as overlord, but economically they provided large supplies of imported luxury items which had significant value as political capital in internal struggles for power.

An inscription at Wat Sema Muang at Ligor (Nakhon Si Thammarat) dated 775 records that a Srivijayan monarch sponsored sanctuaries dedicated to Buddha and the bodhisattvas Padmapani and Vajrapani. The precise nature of the Srivijayan connection with this region has not been established. Possibly the isthmian region of the Siam-Malay Peninsula enjoyed some sort of loose affiliation with the Srivijayan mandala, which like most mandalas expanded and contracted according to the charisma of the *cakravartin* who stood at the apex of its power structure.

For almost 200 years, the ports of the Straits of Melaka may have been linked by some kind of treaty or commercial arrangements to limit competition, rather than a hegemonic system based on force. In the mid-ninth century, Srivijaya's position as the head of a commercial league in the Straits began to show signs of eroding. Malayu-Jambi, Srivijaya's neighbour which Yijing had visited on his voyages to and from India, sent its own ambassadors to China in 852 and 871.

The first Srivijayan mission to China in 180 years finally arrived in 904.<sup>249</sup> In all, Srivijaya only sent six missions to China in 278 years. The Tang dynasty ceased to exist two years later, and another period of division in China began. The end of the Early Classic marks the end of the long relationship between Srivijaya and Tang China.

## THE KARIMUN INSCRIPTION

The south end of the Straits of Melaka is clogged by hundreds of islands called the Riau Archipelago. In the center of the entrance to the Straits is Karimun Island, which Chinese sailors have used as a landmark since at least the fourteenth century. The island is populated by a sea nomad group who call themselves the Akit who are Buddhist and in the 1990s still lived mostly on boats. They also revered

an inscription on a cliff face (Figure 5.8). It has no date, but it is written in Sanskrit in Nagari script which appeared in Buddhist temple complexes in Java in the late eighth century. It states, “these are the footsteps of the Mahayanist Gautama who possesses an armillary sphere”.<sup>250</sup> The cliff is a prominent feature facing north up the Straits of Melaka. The letters are 30 centimeters high, probably meant to be visible to passing sailors.

In later centuries the island was a toll-gathering station for the kingdom of Malayu. The most probable explanation for the presence of this inscription is that it was written by the head of a force stationed here during the Early Classic period to exercise control over shipping passing through the channel on behalf of the overlord of Srivijaya (or possibly Malayu if it was inscribed after 850).

## THE RELIGION OF SRIVIJAYA

Recent scholarship has called attention to the fact that the division of Buddhism into Mahayana and Hinayana traditions is an Orientalist creation. The actual situation is much more complex.<sup>251</sup> The term “esoteric Buddhism” is now preferred by some scholars. Within this realm are many vehicles (*yana*). One of these is “Perfection Path” Buddhism; other streams include Mantrayana, Vajrayana, and Tantrayana. The Talang Tuwo inscription uses vocabulary from the Perfection Path.<sup>252</sup>

Buddhists from Kedah, Srivijaya, and Malayu probably contributed to the development of international esoteric Buddhism. In addition to the verses found in Protoclassic Kedah, an inscription from Nalanda from the ninth century may denote the transfer of Sumatran ideas through a Srivijayan monastery there.<sup>253</sup> Southeast Sumatra was a center of Buddhist scholarship by the late seventh century; it remained so until at least the eleventh century, when another famous Buddhist, Atisa, spent 10 years there. (See Figures 5.9 and 5.10; see also Chapter 6.)

## Nalanda and Srivijaya

Nalanda was an important center of Buddhist education and discussion in Bargaon, Bihar, Bengal. The name is derived from a *naga* who was honored in a sacred tank there. Two of Buddha’s most famous disciples, Sariputta and Moggallana, were said to have been born there. Nalanda had become a center of monastic education by the second century, when the philosopher Nagarjuna lived there. Chinese Buddhist pilgrims including Yijing and Xuan Zang studied there in the seventh century. Students came from as far away as Japan.

In the mid-eighth century the Pala Dynasty arose in this region. They gave strong encouragement to the development of esoteric Buddhism, and Nalanda became a great center of scholarship and art. The library of Nalanda was destroyed in the tenth century, but the university continued to exist until around 1250. Nalanda exerted significant influence on the Buddhist sculpture of the Straits of Melaka and Java in the late eighth century. The worship of such deities as Padmapani, Vajrapani, Manjusri, Tara, and Lokeshvara is typical of the Vajrayana school which was popularized at Nalanda. These deities





**Figure 5.8** Karimun inscription, within a modern enclosure. The depressions on the cliff probably symbolized the Chief's footprints.



**Figure 5.9** Avalokitesvara statue from Seguntang Hill, Palembang



**Figure 5.10** Buddha statue from Seguntang Hill, Palembang

are mentioned in inscriptions from the late eighth century in Java, Sumatra, Cambodia, and the Malay Peninsula.

A large copperplate Sanskrit inscription found at Nalanda in 1921 records that King Devapaladeva around the mid-ninth century gave the revenue from five villages to support a monastery established there by Maharaja Balaputradeva, lord of Suvarnadvipa (Sumatra).



The genealogy of Balaputra has occasioned much discussion. He was described as a “younger son” (the literal meaning of Balaputra) of a king of Java named Samaragravira and a grandson of the Sailendra “king of Java” whose name is not mentioned. One theory is that Balaputra’s mother was from Srivijaya. He may have been passed over for the kingship, launched a revolt, was defeated, and moved to Srivijaya. These speculations fit the circumstantial evidence, but so do many other theories. There is much we do not know about the politics of this period. The main point to note is that relations between Srivijaya and Bengal were sufficiently close that large numbers of Sumatran monks went to Bengal to study.<sup>254</sup>

## ARABO-PERSIAN SOURCES<sup>255</sup>

Srivijaya experienced a long period of prosperity from the seventh to the early eleventh centuries. Arab and Persian texts from this period refer to the power of the maharaja of Zabag, which stretched from the island of *Srivija* (transcribed in Arabic as *Srbza*) to *Rami* (Ramni, Lamuri, at the north tip of Sumatra) and Kalah, the stretch of coastline on the west of the Malay Peninsula from Kedah to Phuket and Takuapa, where ships from Oman were said to come. The Arab geographer Mas’udi in 995 described the maharaja as having more perfume, camphor, spices, and other precious goods than any other ruler.

The *Akhbâr al-sîn wa’l-hind* (*Reports of China and India*), attributed in part to first-hand information from “Sulaymân the trader”, mentions Zabag after Ramni, probably Lamuri in Aceh, and Salat (probably from the Malay word *selat*, “strait”), states that it was a kingdom ruling Kalah Bar (probably the west coast of south Thailand and Kedah), and notes the presence there of camphor, gold, a volcano, and cannibals. *The Voyage of the Arab Merchant Sulaymen to India and China, edited in 851, followed by remarks by Abu Zayd Hasan* (around 916), tells the story of a Khmer king who wished to have the head of the maharaja of Zabag presented to him on a platter. The maharaja, hearing of this, attacked and killed the Khmer king. This is probably a legend, but historians have been tempted to see in this a reference to circumstances which might explain the statement in a Khmer inscription that Jayavarman II desired to liberate Cambodia from Javanese suzerainty, and therefore conducted a special ritual on Phnom Kulen in 802.

The *Kitâb al-masâlik wa’l-mamâlik* (*Book of Routes and Kingdoms*), ascribed to Ibn Khurdâdhbih, contains similar information. Ibn Khurdâdhbih also says that the Mahârâja of Zâbaj received gold each day which was thrown into a pool of water. The early tenth-century account of Abû Zayd of Siraf shows that Zâbaj can be identified with Srivijaya, given that he locates a toponym within it called Sribuza. The Indian Muslim Abû Rayhân al-Bîrûnî (973–1048) stated that these isles were known to the Indians of his day as Suwarna Dîb (i.e., Suvarnavdipa).

Zabag or Zabag probably corresponds to *Jawaka*, which may either refer to Java or South Sumatra. Arab texts continue to use the name Zabag into the twelfth century, when it probably referred to a polity governed from Jambi.<sup>256</sup> The geographer Edrisi in 1154 stated that Chinese had begun to frequent Zabag and its island dependencies in preference to China and India, where tyranny and confusion were rife. Zabag was depicted as having just laws and pleasant, businesslike inhabitants. As a result, Zabag was “heavily populated and so often frequented by foreigners”.

## ARCHAEOLOGY OF PALEMBANG

An archaeologist who surveyed Palembang in 1930 found that “The Palembang lowlands district belongs to the areas poorest in antiquities from Sumatra.”<sup>257</sup> Remains of brick structures were found, but their sites had been quarried for building material. This destruction was still in progress in 1960.<sup>258</sup> A range of Early Classic statuary has been found in Palembang, mostly of an “international Buddhist style”.<sup>259</sup>

Archaeological research in the early 1990s yielded the first systematic records of habitation remains in Palembang. Excavations in the Seguntang area and other sites recovered several hundred sherds of Chinese ceramics of the late Tang and Five Dynasties periods (ninth and tenth centuries) and a lesser amount of wares from the Persian Gulf. Evidence of bead-making using imported raw glass, and Indian beads of Indo-Pacific type were found. At the Museum Badaruddin site in central Palembang a total of 55,000 artifacts was recovered, 40 per cent dating to the ninth and tenth centuries. Imported ceramics comprised 18 per cent of the total. Remains of a boat of Seasian construction were found at Sambirejo, dated to 610–775 by radiocarbon. The boat is estimated to have been 26 meters long.<sup>260</sup>

## TRADE AND SOCIETY IN SRIVIJAYA AND SUMATRA

Trade expanded considerably during the Early Classic. The foundation of the Tang dynasty in 618 led to greater demand for luxuries by the court and temples, and more Chinese consumers seem to have been able to purchase foreign medicine and spices. Buddhism’s increasing popularity in China led to increased demand for incense for ceremonies.

Transport in China became more efficient. A road was built in 728 to connect Yangzhou, the main center of trade at the junction of the Yangzi River and the Grand Canal, with Guangzhou. In 841 CE, “Guangzhou enjoyed the profits of the barbarian ships where all the valuable goods were gathered. . . . Of all those who served at Guangzhou, not one returned without being fully laden (with the wealth they acquired).”<sup>261</sup>

Foreigners were not allowed to trade privately in China, nor were Chinese traders allowed to go overseas. Until 714, the central government did not supervise foreign trade; it was regulated by local governments. When ambassadors came to China, they could bring goods with them to trade. Chinese officials had exclusive rights to trade with foreign ships for the first 10 days after a ship reached port. Some commodities were the monopoly of the Chinese government. A duty of 30 per cent was charged on other goods; the envoys could sell the rest. A specific location for foreign trade was fixed, as was a specific warehouse for storing goods bought by the government.<sup>262</sup>

The account written by the Buddhist monk-adventurer named Yijing in the late seventh century is important for the light it sheds on maritime trade. Many previous Chinese pilgrims to the Buddhist holy lands in India had travelled overland, like Xuan Zang, whose travels were immortalized in the classic *Journey to the West*, but by the late seventh century the sea route had become more popular. Passengers from Guangzhou sometimes went to Java but more often Palembang, where they changed ship, then proceeded to Sri Lanka and from there to northeast India.<sup>263</sup>

Yijing mentioned another monk who sailed in a merchant vessel “heavily loaded with goods” from Guangzhou or Hanoi to Heling. The ship then went to Malayu, but sank in a storm because it was overloaded; the monk drowned. No doubt this represents the tip of the iceberg; travel between South Sumatra and China by Indonesian ships carrying a wide variety of goods from both Seasia and the shores of the Indian Ocean was probably common but also hazardous during the Tang period.

In the late seventh or early eighth century, Srivijaya “sent several missions to the court to submit complaints about border officials seizing (their goods) and an edict was issued ordering (the officials at) Guangzhou to appease them (by making inquiries)”.<sup>264</sup> This is the only reference in Tang records of action by the central government of China on behalf of Seasian merchants at Canton. Srivijaya was a major mercantile power in Guangzhou; Srivijayans were leaders of the foreign merchant community at Guangzhou until 742.<sup>265</sup> One reason for this may have been an incident in 684: the governor of Guangzhou was killed in a manner which suggests that the murderer was an Indonesian who had been mistreated. This incident may have been remembered 800 years later: a Portuguese writer said that foreigners were not allowed to go to Guangzhou “for fear of the Javanese and Malays”.<sup>266</sup>

After 714, a “Commissioner for Trading with Foreign Ships”<sup>267</sup> was appointed by the central government. This official’s duties included reporting to the imperial court and “all the cities” when a ship from the South Seas arrived. The captains or chief merchants on the ships had to register their names, declare their cargo, and pay duty. Foreigners who tried to evade duty were arrested. The commissioner had to protect the foreign merchants, provide translators, and forward the tribute and sometimes the ambassadors to the capital.<sup>268</sup> Foreign merchants often offered rich bribes of rhinoceros horn and pearls to evade duty.

By the eighth century, Chinese merchants had begun to sojourn in Seasia. Ancient rules making private trade with foreigners illegal were being gradually eased, and the prestige of the merchant class was rising. By the ninth century, members of the imperial family, regional aristocrats, and civil servants were all becoming involved in trade with Seasia.<sup>269</sup> Yijing’s references to ships belonging to the king of Srivijaya indicates that Seasian rulers were directly involved in trade.

### Local trade in Sumatra

The first inscriptions of Srivijaya refer to frontier roads, *samaryyadapatha*, suggesting that they were located on communication routes. In the early 1700s, chiefs from the highlands at the source of the Musi and its tributaries swore oaths of loyalty to the Palembang sultans on the summit of Seguntang Hill. This may have been a relic of the oaths inscribed on stones in the seventh century. Highland chiefs such as those of nineteenth-century Malaya probably supported their own bands of armed men, guarded the lowland ports from attack, and maintained security along the routes from the lowlands into the highlands, whence came the rare and precious items so prized by the foreigners. Such a relationship is depicted by silver plates inscribed with what are termed *piagems* (“decisions”) found in highland South Sumatra. These record reciprocal rights and duties of the highland and lowland groups. The Palembang sultans of the eighteenth century monopolized commodities such as pepper, ivory, rhinoceros horn, rattan, coffee, gold, and benzoin, which highland chiefs were obligated to supply them with.<sup>270</sup> The *piagems* mention



“Free Frontier Guards”, chiefs from the ancient Pasemah Plateau who protected Palembang from attack. The *piagems* also set forth methods for settling debts between lowlanders and highlanders. There were two types of commerce: the provision of goods and services according to custom, and business dealings between individuals. “Free” probably meant “exempt from taxation” but liable for other services; when the Dutch attacked Palembang in the early 1820s, people from Pasemah built a fort for the Palembang sultan and even provided their own food.<sup>271</sup>

Closely connected with the provisions of goods and services was the custom of *adat perdagangan serah*, literally “custom of voluntary deliveries” which obligated the Palembang sultans to give three imported necessities to the highlanders: iron, cloth, and salt. In the early nineteenth century, much of the iron tools, gold jewellery, and cotton cloth made in Palembang was destined for the highlands.<sup>272</sup>

### UPSTREAM, DOWNSTREAM, AND OVERLAND

In 1975 F.L. Dunn published a diagram of the relationships between highland collectors and lowland traders in the Malay Peninsula which implied that the highlanders were usually (but not always) at a disadvantage in price negotiations with lowland buyers of their products.<sup>273</sup> In an influential article published in 1977, Bennet Bronson published a very similar diagram which asserted that Sumatran highland-lowland relationships were asymmetrical. Neither author noted that geographers had identified a dendritic model of marketing (for its resemblance to a tree’s root system). Dendritic networks are often found in colonial societies where mother countries extract resources, or in areas where population is dispersed and transportation routes are few. Dendritic networks are associated with “gateway communities”, which are normally located at boundaries between areas of very different topography and resource distribution such as river mouths.<sup>274</sup>

Bronson’s does not say so, but his diagram is obviously meant to portray the system which he believes existed in ancient southeast Sumatra. The primary collecting center would be the river mouth ports, and the dominant overseas trading partners would be Chinese, Indians, Persians, and Arabs. This model has been used many times since to characterize other Seasian regions where rivers were important transport routes leading to ports which were in contact with long-distance trading networks. The model implies that lowland ports have the most economic power because of their location at the gateways to the hinterland; the farther up the river system one goes, the less bargaining power the local inhabitants possess with their downstream trading partners.

This system does not work for Sumatra for several reasons. First, the dendritic model implies that gateway communities should be located at river mouths. This was not true of Sumatra. Palembang, the political center of Srivijaya, is 90 kilometers from the mouth of the Musi; Muara Jambi, the eleventh-century capital of Jambi, is 75 kilometers inland. These sites occupy superior positions in internal communication networks, an attribute which river mouth sites lack. The implication is that settlement patterns in these areas were not a response to external factors such as contact with India and China; instead, they were an adaptation to internal factors.<sup>275</sup>

P.-Y. Manguin<sup>276</sup> shows that *anak sungai dan teluk rantau*, “bends and reaches” in Malay, is a literary expression used to mean the frontiers of Malay harbor-cities. A literal translation would be “tributaries

and estuaries”. Nobles in Sumatra would not choose to live at the downstream ends of their river systems, where they would be subject to floods, tidal waves, and seaborne attack. The major centers of population in Sumatra until the late twentieth century were not in the lowland river valleys, unlike mainland Southeast Asia; they were in the cooler, more fertile highland valleys. The model of the Malay Peninsula which Bronson used is not applicable to Sumatra. The location of centers at hinterland river junctions conforms to the pattern of *kadātuan*, *samaryyāda*, and *mandala*.<sup>277</sup>

Ethnohistoric sources demonstrate that there was an equilibrium between Sumatran highland regions, where intensive agriculture was feasible, and lowland confluences which had access to imported necessities such as iron, salt, and cloth. O.W. Wolters suggested that one of Palembang’s advantages was “the belt of swamp reaching a considerable way inland and giving protection against attack from the interior”.<sup>278</sup> Wolters, so perceptive in most of his analysis of ancient Sumatra, was misled by the common assumption that in Southeast Asia “the sea unites, the land divides” into overlooking the fact that Palembang is located on the *upstream* side of the swamps, not the downstream end, and thus the swamps protect it against attackers coming from downstream, not upstream. Palembang’s location maximizes the center’s ability to communicate with all parts of its huge hinterland, rather than isolating it from its hinterland. Sultanates in the Malay Peninsula had little hinterland, but this was not the case with the traditional centers of power in Sumatra.

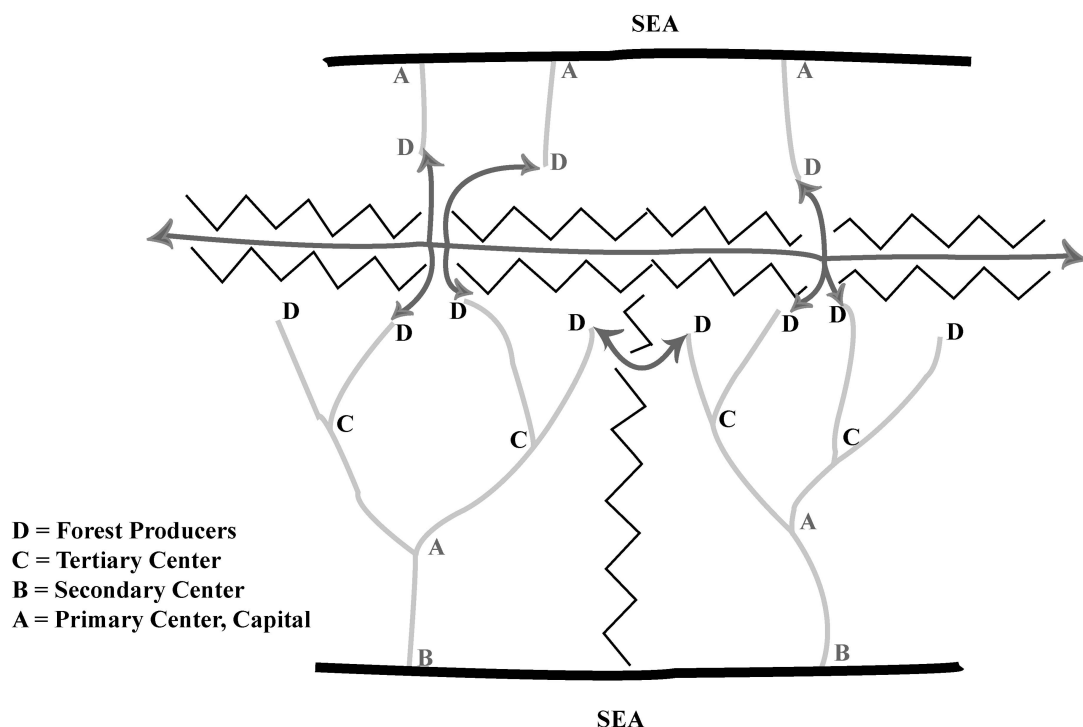
### Sumatran transport and settlement: Regional analysis

In Sumatra most monumental complexes are located in the hinterland, not in the lowlands. The oldest monuments in Sumatra were created in the Pasemah highlands, at the upstream end of the Musi drainage (Figure 5.11). Imported items found in sites of the Pasemah culture include Preclassic South Asian beads and Dongson drums. Two Dongson drums have been found in the west coast site of Padang Peri, Bengkulu, indicating that trans-island routes existed in prehistory. Little research has been conducted on overland routes in precolonial Sumatra, but it is probable that the early monuments were connected to each other by overland routes.

The development of Palembang and Muara Jambi as the centers of early mandalas is only logical if ancient internal communication and transport networks are taken into account. When traffic between Indonesia, India, West Asia, and China increased, the inhabitants of the Musi drainage would have had the necessary expertise to exploit new opportunities because they had already developed administrative institutions and transportation networks. Recent discoveries indicate that the centers of early ports were actually closer to the sea in the Protoclassic and moved farther upstream in the Early Classic. This is the opposite of what the upstream-downstream model would predict.

### SULAWESI AND BORNEO DURING THE EARLY CLASSIC

No important Early Classic inscriptions have been found in Sulawesi and Borneo, but traditional scripts there indicate probable connections with Srivijaya. Buddhist artifacts from the Early Classic have been found on both islands.



**Figure 5.11** Diagram of upstream-downstream communication in Sumatra

### East Kalimantan

An important bronze Buddha image has been found at Kota Bangun, eastern Kalimantan, in the same area as the Protoclassic Kutai inscriptions. It was originally dated to the Protoclassic period because of its similarity to the sculpture of Amaravati, an early Buddhist site in south India. New discoveries have suggested that it should be assigned to the Early Classic period instead.<sup>279</sup> Other Buddhist statuary of the Early Classic has also been reportedly excavated by local diggers. This includes a bronze Buddha said to have come from Sanggara, north of the delta of the Mahakam River which leads to Kutai, and two bodhisattvas from Tabang, a trading center on a tributary of the Mahakam, some distance inland from the delta.

The regalia of the Sultan of Kutai in the nineteenth century included golden objects, several of which are now kept in the Museum of Kutai. These include a four-armed statue of Visnu from Muara Kaman of the ninth or tenth century and a pendant with scenes from the *Ramayana* in repoussé. Some sherds of ninth- or tenth-century Yueh ware have also been found in surveys in East Kalimantan.<sup>280</sup>

The Archaeological Service of the Netherlands Indies listed seven sites in the Samarinda and Tenggarong districts in its inventory for 1914. These included the *yupa* inscriptions, a Nandi (Siva's bull), and a "monster head" (perhaps a *kala*); at Kombeng were remains of a temple associated with six stone sculptures, including three images of Siva and other associated images, including a Ganesa, Karttikeya, and Brahma. At Kutai "remains of temples, stone and metal images" were reported without details.<sup>281</sup>

## West Kalimantan

The major river on Borneo's west coast is the Kapuas, 1,010 kilometers long. The Kapuas area may have been known to China in the Tang period, though it sent no embassies. Several Tang sources mention a place there called *Jinli pishi*, probably Sanskrit Vijayapura. It had cities and a ruler.<sup>282</sup> The Archaeological Service of the Netherlands Indies listed 15 sites in this valley in its inventory for 1914, but no archaeological investigations were carried out. The reports offer titillating glimpses of the types of sites which might have existed. At Kuala Sungei Sampit, for example, a jar was found containing 27 gold plates with ancient script, others in the form of the sun, cow, vajra, and other shapes, and two rings. No structures or other objects were reported in association with this hoard. At Sanggau "a great quantity of bricks and sandstone was found, which had once formed walls with mouldings above and decorations on the corners." Remains of a lingga and its base were found, and a golden lingga which was sent to the museum in Batavia (Jakarta). At Monggo Batah were statues of Nandi, Ganesa, a lingga, and gold ornaments. At Batu Sampai was a stone with two lines of ancient script. At Ngeris remains of Hindu temples and two ancient ships were reported. Batu Pahat was reported to have a pyramidal stone 6 meters long and 4 meters wide with inscription. In Sepauk and Nanga Serawai were more remains of what appear to have been Saivaite relics.<sup>283</sup>

In 1931 N.J. Krom, working from copies (he did not visit the sites), observed that the script used for the Sanggau inscription was similar to the Taruma script of West Java (fifth century), while the Batu Pahat script was somewhat later, of the seventh century, and contained a Sanskrit Buddhist citation.<sup>284</sup> Beside the inscription are carvings of stupas with multi-tiered parasols, or *cattrā*. The Batu Sampai inscription was thought to be of the same period, and possibly contained the word *prabuh*, "Lord".<sup>285</sup>

One of the most interesting artifacts in the Kapuas region is a *mukhalingga* from the Kapuas-Sepauk river junction found in 1880. No lingga with a face on the shaft has been reported from Sumatra, and in Java they only appear in the Late Classic. O'Connor dates this one to the Early Classic.<sup>286</sup> A Nandi has recently been found there along with Chinese ceramics of the tenth century.<sup>287</sup>

A hoard of gold and silver objects from the Early Classic was found at Sambas, at Borneo's northwest tip, in 1941. These included a standing Buddha with both hands in the gesture of *abhaya mudra*, or "dispelling fear", often identified as Dipankara, said to have been a protector of sailors; other seated Buddhas; and five Avalokitesvaras stylistically dated to the Early Classic.<sup>288</sup> The area is a source of gold. It is possible that they were made locally. In style and symbolism they suggest a connection with Srivijaya, though we cannot say whether it was political or merely cultural and economic. The Sambas River has yielded few other known Early Classic remains.

## Sulawesi

Sulawesi has yielded few Early Classic artifacts. One is an 80-centimeter-high bronze statue of Buddha from Sikendeng, on the Karama River. Like the Buddha of Kota Bangun, it has been dated to the Proto-classic period,<sup>289</sup> but modern art historians assign it to the Early Classic.

The *bissus*, or shamans, of South Sulawesi and the priest's bell with a stylized *vajra* donated to the musicological collection of the Batavian Society (now the National Museum of Indonesia) by the datu of Luwu at Palopo are the only other known vestiges of Early Classic culture on that island.<sup>290</sup>

## HISTORY OF EARLY CLASSIC JAVA TO 800

### Chinese sources and the transfer to central Java

*Heling* is the Chinese name for a kingdom based in central Java which sent embassies to the Tang court beginning in 640. Walaing may have been the kingdom's Javanese name.<sup>291</sup> The kingdom was Buddhist; a Chinese pilgrim, Huining, went there at the invitation of a Javanese monk, Jñanabhadra, in 664–665 to translate Theravada Sanskrit texts into Chinese. He was assisted by a Vietnamese monk, Van Ki, who eventually moved to Srivijaya. Another Vietnamese monk, Khuy Sung, accompanied a Chinese monk, Ming Yuan, to Java on his way to Sri Lanka and India, as did numerous others.

Heling sent its last known embassy in 818; thereafter, beginning in 820, Javanese embassies are recorded under the name *Shepo*, which in the eighth century had been used as the name of Heling's capital. A country named Shepo appeared in Chinese records of the fifth century. The Chinese used this transcription for five diplomatic missions from Java, including two between 813 and 818, and others in 820, 832, and 860 to 873. The reasons why the names of Javanese tributary kingdoms kept changing are unknown, but they probably betoken shifting fortunes among a number of competing elites and capitals. The Sailendra and Sanjaya families may have been jockeying for position during this era. After 873 there were no missions to China for 160 years. This may have been due in part to the parlous condition of the Tang, which collapsed in 906, and partly to the disappearance of the central Javanese center of power about 15 years later. The Early Classic time frame of 600 to 900 matches closely the careers of both of these polities.

Archaeological excavations at Batujaya, on a silted-up branch of the Cibuaya River in the western part of the delta about 20 kilometers west of the Cibuaya site, between 2002 and 2006, resulted in significant discoveries, including large square foundations of brick and stone, and clay votive tablets depicting Buddhist motifs associated with a non-Esoteric form of Buddhism stylistically dated to the sixth or seventh centuries. This layer may have been the site of Heling, which sent missions to China in the seventh century and which Yijing described as a Hinayana country.<sup>292</sup> The earliest archaeological evidence of inscriptions and temples in central Java dates from the late seventh century. Perhaps Heling moved to central Java; it is also possible that the Chinese kept on using the old name for Java's main kingdom even though there was no direct connection between the old and the new polities.

## JAVANESE SOURCES OF CLASSIC HISTORY

The most thorough history of Classic Indonesia was written by N.J. Krom, which is not accessible to most people since it was written in the Dutch language. Krom did not follow conventional historiographical

method; his book contains much philology, with complex discussions about interpretations of particular words in inscriptions, often without any firm conclusion. This is unfortunately one of the obstacles that confronts students of early Javanese literature.

About 3,000 inscriptions from Classic and Postclassic Indonesia have been preserved. They are written in Sanskrit, Old Malay, Old Javanese, Old Balinese, Arabic, and Tamil. Most of them were found in Java. In Java, inscriptions belong to a range of genres. A few are *jayapattra* (judicial decisions) and records of financial transactions. Some describe warfare and other events, but the vast majority are records of the establishment of *sima*, or tracts of land the occupants of which were relieved of specific taxes and obligations (and there were many types of these) in return for serving religious establishments. Inscriptions from other islands did not have specific genres.

Most *sima* inscriptions follow a standard format beginning with a very specific and complex date, followed by a list of names of officials involved in the formation of the *sima*, its location, and the reasons for its establishment. Some inscriptions describe the founding ceremony, including rituals to expel evil spirits from the site and the celebrations which followed. Some are copies of originals which may have become difficult to read, which sometimes were edited to make them intelligible to later generations when old words were no longer understood (and thus some new misunderstandings were sometimes introduced).

The areas concerned were happy to have *sima* status; it was apparently less onerous than paying normal taxes and services. The inscriptions were probably erected at entrances to *sima* to make sure that tax collectors did not trespass. Tax collection may have been farmed out rather than conducted by the central administration. Tax collectors probably had to pay a certain amount to the government for the right to collect taxes, after which they tried to extract tax over and above the stipulated amount, in order to earn a profit.

Archaic *Kawi* (a local derivative of Brahmi) was used in inscriptions before 832, mainly for edicts issued in the name of the Sailendra rulers, including one dated 775 in southern Thailand. After 832 the script evolved into a new form called standard Kawi. “On the whole the standard of Sanskrit scholarship was very high in ancient Java and contrasts favourably with that reflected in many inscriptions of ancient India.”<sup>293</sup>

## Tuk Mas

The inscription at Tuk Mas (“Golden Spring”) has no date, but the script in it is the oldest in central Java, so it is estimated that it was carved around 650. It is found on the slope of the extinct volcano Merbabu. There are still springs in the vicinity. The text reads “This spring, sprung from pure white lotuses, in some parts oozing from stones and sand, in others spreading with cool and clear water, flows as extensively as the Ganga.” Also engraved on the stone are symbols, including a conch, discus, and mace, attributes of Visnu. The first known ruler of central Java, Sanjaya, was a devotee of Siva; the Tuk Mas inscription may not be connected with Sanjaya, but with a kingdom in west Java, where Visnu was



prominent. Mount Merbabu and its twin Merapi form the symbolic core of central Java. For the next 250 years most artistic and intellectual activity was spread around their feet.

### Canggal/Mount Wukir

On top of a low hill at the southern edge of the Kedu plain west of Mounts Merbabu and Merapi, 12 kilometers from Borobudur, are the remains of a temple dedicated to Siva which was remodeled in the ninth century. The inscription is dated 732 CE, using a chronogram “*rasa, organ, Vedas*”, *i.e.* 456, which is to be read in reverse as 654 Śaka; dates in that system can be roughly converted to CE by adding 78. If the inscription had to be dated by palaeography, the result might be different, because the script is actually more archaic than that of late seventh-century Srivijaya.

The inscription commemorates the erection of a lingga on a hill by King Sanjaya. It praises Siva and asks that he protect and give success to the reader. The inscription also invokes Visnu, but indirectly as the “lord of Sri”, as if unwilling to give him too much attention. Sri, the goddess of wealth, is also invoked. Many gold rings have been found in central Java with the name “Sri” inscribed in reverse, so that they could be used as seals. Seal rings seem to have functioned as personal identification in Java; in the *Ramayana* Jatayu gives Rama Sita’s ring as proof that he has found her.

The Canggal inscription mentions the excellent island of Java which possesses abundant grains and gold mines and a temple of Siva, then praises a king called Sanna, who lived in Java and ruled through conciliation and generosity. He died and was replaced by his son, a king who was compared to Mount Meru; it is implied that the ruler concerned was Sanjaya. Sanjaya set up his kingdom in 716, according to later inscriptions starting with that of Kayuwangi in about 880. Sanjaya called his kingdom Kunjarakunja. Another kingdom with this name was found in south India between Travancore and Tinnevely where an ancient shrine is dedicated to Agastya. A century and a half after his death, Javanese kings portrayed Sanjaya as the founder of a long line of kings of a central Javanese kingdom called Mataram and invoked him as a legitimizing and protective ancestor. He has much in common with Jayavarman II of Cambodia, who lived about 50 years later.

After the Canggal inscription, a new type of script was introduced to central Java. Brahmi script was originally meant for carving on stone. By 750, Javanese inscriptions began using a new style of writing termed Archaic Kawi (after the literary genre). Kawi was probably developed for writing on palm leaves before it was used on stone. About 13 major inscriptions used this script, including the Dinoyo inscription in east Java (760) and the Ligor inscription (775).

After Sanjaya, a king known as Rakai Panangkaran may have ruled central Java for 38 years (746–784). Panangkaran was his family’s domain. He was also known as *dyah* Pancapana. He probably expanded the kingdom from the Kedu plain to incorporate the north coast, where Heling may have existed. A Chinese record of 742 to 755 states that Java’s capital moved east to a new site called *Pulo* (*pura?*) Giasi. Late in his reign two major Buddhist temple complexes were inaugurated in the area east of Mount Merapi: Kalasan and Sewu. These are credited to King Indra Sanggramadhanamjaya. He may be the same person as Panangkaran.

## Old Malay inscriptions of Java

In addition to inscriptions in Old Javanese, seven inscriptions from Java were written in Old Malay. Several theories have been proposed to account for this. One is that there was once a population in Java who spoke Old Malay, and were later absorbed by the Javanese. The second is that the ruler of Srivijaya imposed his rule temporarily on a section of Java. The Chinese received several reports of warfare between Java and Sumatra during the Early Classic period. Many other explanations are possible.

The inscriptions are not very similar to one another. The oldest is from Sojomerto, on the north coast of west-central Java near Pekalongan. It is palaeographically dated to the early seventh century; it has several features more archaic than the script used in Srivijaya.<sup>294</sup> The inscription is a genealogy of Dapunta Selendra, a devotee of Siva. Here Selendra (similar to Sailendra, about which more is written in the following section) is a personal name. *Dapunta* was used in Srivijaya for the king, but was used in Old Javanese as a title for bureaucrats. One was found at Bogor, near an inscription of Purnavarman, but it is much later (932 CE). One from Candi Sewu, near Prambanan, central Java, is dated 793; the rest come from Bukateja, about 800; two from the same village, Gandasuli, dated 827 and 832. The earlier one records the sponsorship of a Siva temple by a ship captain, a rare non-royal act. The last records an inventory of the possessions of a temple on the Dieng Plateau.<sup>295</sup>

## ŚAILENDRA (SHAILENDRA, SAILENDRA)

*Śailendra* (pronounced Shailendra) is Sanskrit for “lord of the mountain”. This was the name of staunchly Buddhist royal lineage who ruled central Java from around 780 to 832. In 782 or shortly thereafter, an inscription was carved on side B of the inscription set up in 775 by the king of Srivijaya at Ligor. Side B refers to a king named Visnu from the Sailendra lineage who used the titles *rājādhirāja* (king of kings) and Maharaja. This may be the same king as Sanggramadhananjaya, who is glorified in the Kelurak inscription near Prambanan. It is not known whether the Sailendras had already taken power in Srivijaya by this time. Balaputra, a ruler in Sumatra mentioned in the Nalanda inscription of the mid-ninth century, belonged to this family.

A ruler known by the title *Sang Ratu i Halu* who flourished around 768 may have been the first of this line, but the name Sailendra is first mentioned in the Kalasan inscription of central Java dated 778 (three years after the Ligor stone; this may or may not be significant), albeit in a roundabout manner. It states that Maharaja Panangkaran, who despite his grand title was acting under a higher authority described as the “ornament of the Sailendra family”, founded a sanctuary dedicated to the bodhisattva Tara in the village of Kalasa at the behest of his religious teachers. De Casparis argued that Panangkaran was not a Sailendra, but a vassal of the Sailendra Visnu Dharmatungga. The temple which now stands in the village of Kalasan near Yogyakarta represents an expansion of Panangkaran’s original building.

Another important Sailendra inscription is the Kelurak stone, dated 782. Temples associated with the Sailendra include Candi Sari, Borobudur, Mendut, Pawon, Bubrah, and Lumbung. There are some suggestions in Cham sources that the Sailendra had designs on the Cham area in the late eighth century. Vietnamese

annals mention an invasion from Java in 767. An inscription from Nha Trang mentions people who came in ships, stole a lingga, and burnt a temple. The Cham king Satyavarman, however, caught them at sea and defeated them. In 787 another Javanese army is said to have raided Champa and burned another temple.

It is possible, though not certain, that the Sailendra and the Sanjaya rulers belonged to separate lineages. If this is true, the Sailendra reign was short, from about 780 to 830, but glorious. One reading of the evidence suggests that they amalgamated with the Sanjaya through intermarriage around 832. Another theory suggests that the two families ruled different areas, but no evidence for this has come to light. There is no consensus among historians regarding the relationships between the rulers of central Java in the Early Classic; several king lists exist, which do not agree with each other.<sup>296</sup> The confusion may be the result of the complexity of Javanese royal titles, which sometimes resulted in different names being used for the same person, either because of context, the requirement of poetic meters when an inscription was written in Sanskrit, or purely random factors.

A man with the title Rakai of Panunggalan reigned from 784 to 803. His name is recorded in several inscriptions from the Prambanan area. He was also known as Panaraban. The important Buddhist complex at Plaosan was founded during this time.

### Kings and a queen of Java, ninth century

The ruler of central Java in 824, Samaratungga, was the last known king of the Sailendra lineage. His queen was supposedly Princess Tara of Srivijaya, mother of Balaputra. It is likely that their daughter Princess Pramodawardhani married the Raka of Pikatan, a member of the Hindu Sanjaya family. According to one interpretation, their son Balaputra rebelled but was defeated and moved to Srivijaya.

In 842 the lord of Pikatan was the supreme ruler of central Java. He was a Hindu of the Sanjaya line. An inscription dated 856 CE describes the consecration of a temple complex called the abode of Siva, possibly the Prambanan group. During Raka i Pikatan's reign, both Buddhist and Hindu temples received royal sponsorship. He donated to the building of the Buddhist Candi Plaosan. He converted part of the Ratubaka complex from a Buddhist to a Hindu religious site.

J.G. de Casparis argued that this particular *raka* of Pikatan was also the *raka* of Walaing, based on the Sivagrha inscription of 856; that text records that a *raka* abdicated in favour of his son, *raka* Kayuwangi Dyah Lokapala. As noted earlier, abdication was a common ploy by kings to assist their favoured successor to gain power after their death. The Mantyasih inscription of 907 says that Kayuwangi succeeded Pikatan, thus providing de Casparis with the equation of Raka i Walaing and Pikatan. Boechari, on the other hand, asserted that Kumbhayoni was Pikatan's adversary.<sup>297</sup>

The Wanua Tengah III inscription states that Pikatan passed away before Kayuwangi was enthroned, lending support to the idea that Pikatan and Walaing were different people. No completely satisfactory reconstruction has yet been proposed. However, it is probable that the Ratubaka site served as a retreat for rulers who wished to follow the custom of retiring to a life of religious contemplation in their old age.

Walaing is referred to in several Javanese inscriptions dated between 856 and 919. According to an inscription of 863, *Abhayagiri Vihara*, the Ratubaka site, changed its name to Walaing *Kraton*. Raka i

Walaing Pu Kumbhayoni, described as the victor of Walaing, proclaimed that his grandfather was the *devaraja* of Musalakyarastra (“the kingdom of the pounder”), or *sang ratu i Halu* whose palace was in Jangluran. The Mantyasih inscription of 907 mentioned Walaing as the origin of the lineage of Punta Tarka. No more references to the place or title occur after 919.

The last king to rule in central Java during the Classic period was Daksa, whose reign lasted from about 913 to 919. He inaugurated the use of the Sanjaya era beginning March 18, 717.

## SIGNIFICANT INSCRIPTIONS

East Java enters history with a Sanskrit inscription from Dinoyo, near Malang, dated 760, recording the founding of a Hindu temple by the king of Kanjuruhan. This king coexisted with Panangkaran in central Java, but there is no evidence of any contact between them. The king worshipped a lingga which “embodied the essence of royalty”, echoing similar beliefs in Champa and Cambodia. The next major inscription found in east Java was only erected 169 years later, in 929.

The Kelurak inscription dated 782 CE was found between two Buddhist sanctuaries near the major Siva complex of Prambanan. According to the stone, in 782 a teacher from Gaudi (western Bengal) named Kumaraghosa consecrated an image of the bodhisattva Manjusri. The inscription mentions a Sailendra king named Sanggramadhananjaya. Like several other Mahayana Buddhist inscriptions of the Sailendra, it is written in Nagari script. The inscription invokes the three jewels of Buddhism, King Indra, ornament of the Sailendra dynasty, and Kumaraghosa, who set up an image of Manjusri which contained the essence of Buddha, dharma, and sangha on one hand, and Brahma, Visnu, and Mahesvara (Siva) on the other. Kumaraghosa may have been an Indian monk. In the last line, the name Sri Sanggramadhananjaya is legible. This is probably King Indra’s consecration name received upon initiation into a Buddhist order.

After 832, archaic Kawi evolved into a new form called standard Kawi, used until the end of the central Java kingdom in 919. Most known inscriptions were written during the reigns of Kayuwangi, 856 to 882, and Balitung, 899 to 910. The Mantyasih inscription issued in 907 records the foundation of a *sima*. The section which curses anyone who disturbs the *sima* calls upon the spirits of past kings who came from Medang in Poh Pitu (“Seven Bamboos”). This list omits rulers mentioned in other inscriptions who are thought to have been members of the Sailendra line. The location of Medang has never been determined. The Wanua Tengah III inscription was issued a year later, in 908.<sup>298</sup> It gives a list of central Javanese rulers in the context of setting up a *sima* for a Buddhist monastery in the village of Wanua Tengah in the appanage (*watak*) of Pikatan. The first donation recorded took place in 746. The inscription links the fate of various rulers to their generosity to the monastery (or lack of it). Those who did not assist the *sima* suffered evil fates, while those who devoted the yield from a particular plot of rice land lived long and had peaceful reigns. Once again, the Sailendra are absent, and the Sanjaya, who are thought to have been devotees of Siva, are recorded as donors.

The oldest surviving Indonesian Buddhist tract entitled *Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan* was probably written in the ninth century. It contains Sanskrit verses and Old Javanese commentary on them. The subject concerns a form of Vajrayana Buddhism of the type practiced at central Javanese Buddhist temples

after about 800. Its emphasis on two mandalas (*Garbhadhātu* and *Vajradhātu*) is very similar to the Shingon form of Buddhism which was taught in Japan at the same period.

Sometime between 919 and 929 the center of Javanese rule moved from the central to the eastern part of the island. The reason or reasons for the move are unclear. Popular theories include an attack from Sumatra, volcanic eruptions, or other sudden disasters. For the next 300 years, the entire Middle Classic, no more Javanese temples were built from permanent materials, and very few inscriptions were written. Perhaps a large proportion of the specialists in these fields had not survived. The Middle Classic was a dark age in Java.

## ECONOMY AND TRADE IN CENTRAL JAVA

Most of our knowledge of the Javanese economy of this period comes from an indirect source: the inscriptions describing the creation of *sima*.<sup>299</sup> About 200 of these texts have been found. The most important sections are those which specify the number of people employed in certain occupations who can live in the *sima*. These range from goldsmiths to washerwomen and cattle dealers who could live, tax-free, in a temple zone. The inscription also lists such occupations as umbrella makers, drummers and comedians, firefighters, and pimps. Taxes on agricultural land were levied according to whether it was irrigated, and other factors. Communities of foreigners, apparently merchants, were also required to pay tax. All the people in the *sima* lists seem to be united by the fact that they received payment for their services in cash. Such people probably tried to migrate to the *sima* areas to escape taxation, and apparently were able to do so even though they did not have any connection with the religious establishment which was the intended beneficiary of the tax right transfer. This implies a high level of freedom of movement.

*Sima* inscriptions are very precisely dated. This contradicts some simplistic theories according to which Seasians only perceived one kind of time, a cyclical variety; they obviously were quite able to appreciate another kind of time which proceeded in a linear fashion. The inscriptions list the people who witnessed the official establishment of the *sima*, and the gifts given to them. This section is often quite long and detailed; the items themselves seem to have followed a set pattern, including the types of gifts given (mainly textiles and items of gold and silver, including “temple rings”, but also tools, metal containers, animals, and rice). This is followed by a description of the ceremonial founding of the *sima* and celebrations which took place afterward, which included drinking and performances by clowns.

A very few inscriptions deviate from the conventional format by providing additional information. One inscription from Gunung Kidul dated 890 tells the story of a princess who was kidnapped by her younger brother, then abandoned; she committed suicide by throwing herself into a fire. Another prince fled toward the sea, was protected by a village, and brought back safely to the king, who gave the villagers gold and conferred *sima* status on them.

These inscriptions are the exception rather than the rule. Even those which mention wars and the building of temples raise more questions than they answer: Who were the enemy? Which temple is meant? The inscriptions also hint at a complex bureaucracy with many titles, but the duties of particular officials are never specified.<sup>300</sup> Sumptuary laws restricting the right to wear certain types of clothing or jewellery do not seem to have existed in central Java; they appeared later in East Java, however.<sup>301</sup>



## The cash economy

By about 800, when the Khmer were abolishing money, the Javanese began stamping out coins of silver and gold in several denominations (Figure 5.12). During the ninth century the economy seems to have become more standardized; uniform weights and measures had been instituted by the middle of the ninth century. In the late ninth century, villagers had to pay taxes in gold. Some who could not repay their debts ran to the *sima* to escape their debtors, who apparently were not allowed to pursue them there.<sup>302</sup> The inscription of Sugih Manek was set up in the Pasuruan area along the northeast coast of Java in 915 by King Daksa to create a *sima*. A long list of stipulations is included: each buffalo master can only bring four buffaloes into the *sima*; only eight goats and one “cage of eggs” could be brought in; roof-makers, potters, lime-makers, were all regulated. This indicates that even east Java, which had not been heard from since the Dinoyo inscription of 760, was very business-minded.<sup>303</sup>



**Figure 5.12** Early Classic gold coins of Java



## The Wonoboyo hoard and the royal hermitage

In 1990 a group of six men were hired by a villager to remove volcanic sand from her land in the village of Wonoboyo (an ancient Sanskrit name meaning “dangerous forest”) on the slope of Mount Merapi. They discovered a large quantity of gold and silver coins, jewellery, and religious utensils in and around three ancient Chinese jars. The villagers alerted the Central Java Antiquities Department, who discovered brick fragments, a white stone structure, and more Chinese and bronze jars containing 6,000 gold coins weighing 20 kilograms.<sup>304</sup> The Wonoboyo discoveries constitute the most astounding hoard of gold excavated by archaeologists in Southeast Asia.<sup>305</sup> The site was probably a royal hermitage buried by an eruption of Mount Merapi. It is only about 4 kilometers away from the Prambanan temple complex. It would have been an ideal location for a royal hermitage—at a cool place next to a stream. It could even have been the place to which the Raka of Pikatan retreated in 856 after abdicating the throne. The ritual utensils include offering bowls, saucers, basins, dippers, a case with gold chain to be worn over the shoulder, probably a container for a sacred text, a *kendi*, or water-pouring vessel; and golden lotuses. Many have short inscriptions in ninth-century Old Javanese giving the weight of the objects. Chinese ceramics in which they were found also date from this period. Items of personal adornment include ear ornaments, necklaces, medallions, pendants, headbands, hairpins, and armbands.

A second royal hermitage has been found at Seplawan Cave in limestone hills near the south coast of central Java. About 500 meters deep in the cave, two gold statues (one male, one female) were found on a silver base which contained 15 semi-precious stones and other votive objects, in a bronze urn with a silver ladle and other ritual implements, including a silver crown. Outside the mouth of the cave are foundations of two temples, one with a Siva lingga and yoni. The cave is a very suitable location for a *wanaprastha*, “forest dwelling” for an elite couple.<sup>306</sup>

## THE BELITUNG SHIPWRECK

A shipwreck discovered in the Gelasa Strait between Bangka and Belitung Island, Indonesia, in 1998 contained the richest shipload of ancient Chinese products ever found. The ship, sometimes called *Batu Hitam* (Black Rock), probably sank between 830 and 840. It had been built in the Persian Gulf.<sup>307</sup> It had picked up a huge cargo of Chinese artifacts of the highest quality and was on its way through the normal shipping lane from China to Java when it hit a reef and sank within sight of the shore.

The Belitung vessel was one of the first to carry a large cargo of Chinese pottery (Figure 5.13).<sup>308</sup> Besides tens of thousands of Chinese ceramics, the ship carried gold artifacts of imperial quality and silver ingots. The cargo also included a miscellany of other items, including star anise and lead ingots. Items from Southeast Asia, including an Indonesian gold coin, aromatic resin, a well-made wooden box (of jackfruit wood or a similar variety), and a stone mortar and pestle, suggest that the crew included Seasian sailors.<sup>309</sup>

The ship was a veteran of the sea; it had been dismantled in the Straits of Melaka in order to insert new caulking between its planks made from *Melaleuca* (paperbark), a local plant. The hull’s



**Figure 5.13** Tang bowl from Belitung shipwreck

planks were lashed together with *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, one of the most common plants used by Malays and Indonesians for making twine.<sup>310</sup> In the twelfth century it was common for Chinese ships going to *Ta-shih* (Arab lands) to repair their ships in Sumatra.<sup>311</sup> The ship may have loaded its cargo at Yangzhou, the major port in China at this time, though a large proportion of the ship's contents were packed in jars made in Guangdong. What was the ship's destination? One theory is that it was bound for Oman.<sup>312</sup> If that is true, then the ship was hundreds of kilometers off course. This seems highly unlikely.

The ship contained more than 50,000 ceramics from the Changsha kiln complex. This is the first indication of mass production on this scale in the world. It demonstrates that the Chinese had the capacity to organize the shipment hundreds of kilometers from the place of manufacture to the coast. This indicates a degree of logistical ability not previously demonstrated. The combination of quantity and quality of the artifacts in the site is unprecedented for a site of this period. It is improbable that the ship was engaged in a common trading voyage. This was the period of the Javanese Sailendra kingdom, which built major Buddhist monuments such as Borobudur. Chinese monks had been visiting Java for centuries. Java sent six embassies to China between 813 and 839.<sup>313</sup> A ship sent to Java bearing diplomatic gifts in response to a Javanese mission to China would have carried objects of immense value. It is also possible that the ship was going to two different places, such as Java and then Oman.

## LEGEND AND HISTORY IN CENTRAL JAVA: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF THE NINTH CENTURY

### Dieng Plateau

The oldest complex of standing buildings in Indonesia is found on the Dieng Plateau,<sup>314</sup> inside the 2,000-meter-high crater of an extinct volcano. The temples were meant to house Saivite icons. Thomas Stamford Raffles visited the site in 1813, recorded more than 400 structures, and noted that buried gold was so commonly found by the local population that they could pay their taxes with it. Most of the shrines were gradually dismantled for building material in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Only nine still remain.

The first structures were probably built in the early eighth century, perhaps around the time of King Sanjaya. Javanese temple forms were not yet standardized. One temple displays reliefs of the Hindu trinity (Brahma, Siva, and Visnu), one on each side. Another temple has a *snanadroni*, or spout, used to channel fluids used to lustrate the icon (usually a lingga) from inside the temple to the outside. This feature is still found in modern Hindu temples, but this is the only example of this structure in Indonesia; apparently the Javanese changed their ritual after this temple was built. Most of the temples were built in the eighth century, but caves on a peninsula which project into a lake in part of the crater were still being used for meditation in 1210.<sup>315</sup>

Word of the mountain temples may have reached China. *The History of the Tang Dynasty* records that the Javanese king often went up to the mountain district of *Lang-pi-ya* to see the sea. The site was designed to facilitate pilgrimages; traces of ancient stone staircases leading to the site from both north and south still exist. Excavations in 2010 recovered ninth-century Chinese pottery and Persian lusterware (Figures 5.14 and 5.15).

Gedong Songo (“Nine Buildings”) 40 kilometers to the east was probably built between 750 and 775 CE. The structures are located on the outer slope of Mount Ungaran rather than secluded inside a crater. The pattern of displaying Agastya on the south, Durga on the north, and Ganesa on the west of Siva temples was developed here, and remained constant for the next 500 years (Figure 5.16).

After these two complexes were built, the next 50 years from 775 to 825 were characterized by the construction of the most important Buddhist shrines in Java, in the central lowlands south of Mount Merapi.

## BUDDHIST TEMPLES OF CENTRAL JAVA

### Kalasan

A Nagari inscription dated 778 CE records that the religious teacher of the Sailendras dedicated a temple for a statue of the goddess Tara and a monastery. A village named Kalasana was given the status of *sima* in exchange for supporting the temple and its monks. This is the oldest Buddhist inscription in Java. The inscription complicates matters by associating two rulers with this establishment. The first is not named but is described as an ornament of the Sailendra dynasty. The same king is probably the



**Figure 5.14** Dieng Plateau: Arjuna Complex

one mentioned in another inscription from Ratubaka. The second ruler, Panamkarana, may have been a Hindu. According to the Wanua Tengah III inscription, the ashes of the Raka or appanage-holder of Warak were interred here around 827.

A temple still stands in a village named Kalasan which is a later expansion. On one side of the temple courtyard is a row of round stone foundations which may have been bases for stupas; these could have been used to contain ashes. This is the only arrangement of this type known in Java. It is reminiscent of a custom of interring ashes of monks in small stupas in the environs of Buddhist wats in Thailand and Cambodia. Perhaps the temple was expanded when the ashes of the Raka of Warak were deposited there. The plasterwork on the exterior is the best preserved example of this artwork in Java. It was still intact when Raffles visited the site in 1813 (Figure 5.17).

## Sewu

The complex of Sewu consists of 249 temples: 240 chapels arranged in concentric squares around a central courtyard which contains eight secondary shrines and a main temple in the center. The complex was built in the late eighth century and remodeled around 790 by closing off some entrances, apparently because of new esoteric Buddhist ideology.<sup>316</sup> An inscription dated 792 CE suggests that the complex was





**Figure 5.15** Dieng Plateau: Visnu relief from Candi Srikandi



**Figure 5.16** Gedong Songo

designed as a mandala dedicated to Manjusri. Inscriptions suggest that some chapels were sponsored by officials, not the king. This was also true of Plaosan (see the following section).

The inscription dated 792 seems to refer to both the completion of a temple and the consecration of an image. The bodhisattva Manjusri was part of the name of a shrine within the complex. When the temple was redesigned in 790, it may have become a different mandala with another esoteric Buddhist deity, Vairocana at the center.

The Ratubaka inscription carved in the same year mentions Dharmottunggadeva, probably the consecration name of the king. If the earlier king had died and been succeeded by a new ruler, this would explain some phrases in the Sewu inscription. The change of iconography may have been due to the new king's preference (Figure 5.18).

## Plaosan

Plaosan is located 1 kilometer east of Sewu. This sanctuary has a rectangular layout, with two main shrines each containing three rooms, surrounded by 58 chapels and 116 stupas. There are more





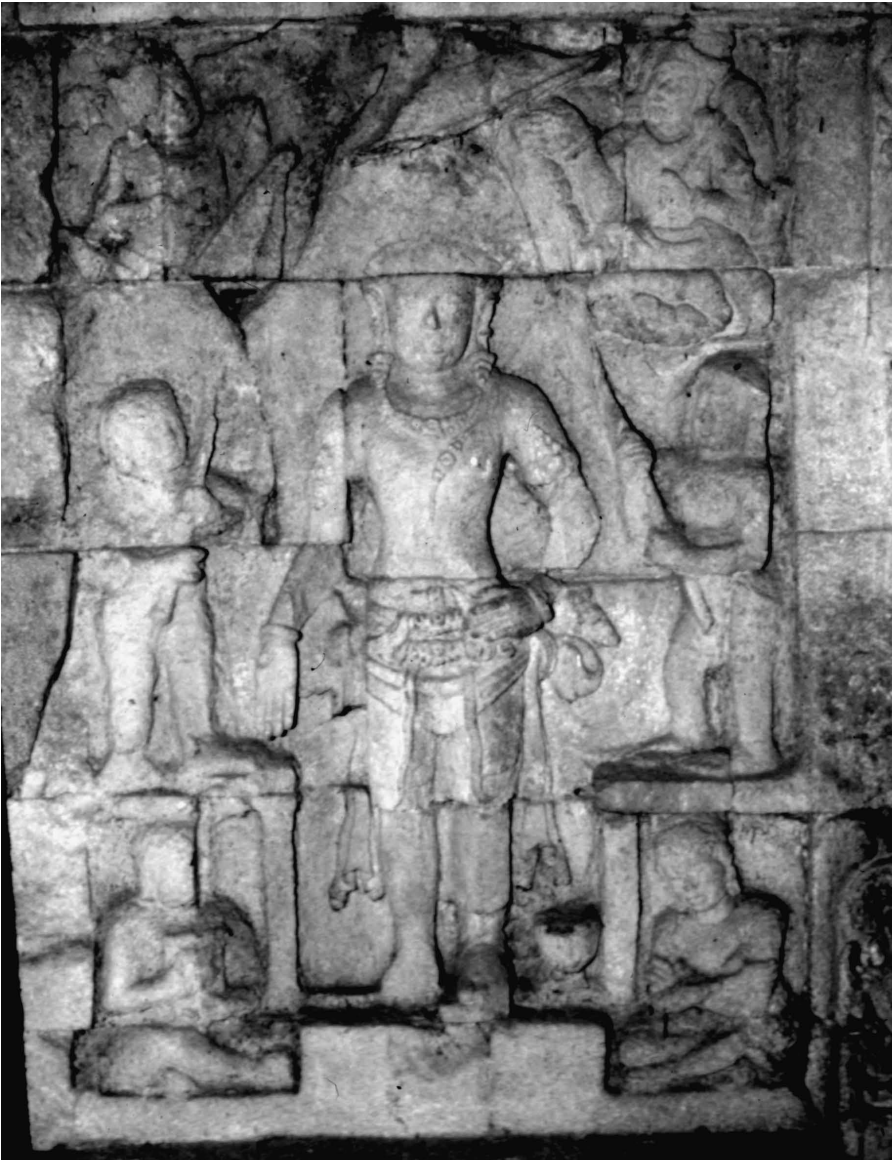
**Figure 5.17** Kalasan Kala head, with stucco still well preserved



**Figure 5.18** Sewu guardian figure (Dvarapala)

structures to the north and south. Another Nagari inscription was found here in 1816. Part of it, including the date, is missing, but its script is the same as the Sewu inscription, so it probably dates from around 780 to 800. It mentions Buddha images and temples (*prasada*), and the founder of the Sailendra lineage (but unfortunately not his name). The buildings now visible were built later, in the mid-ninth century. The inscription discusses the obstructions which have to be surmounted to become a Buddha, which involves an ascent through 10 levels. The inscription states that the ruler had reached the tenth level where exist such deities as Avalokitesvara, Maitreya (the future Buddha), Manjusri, and Samantabhadra. The Plaosan complex has many statues of these four deities. A statue had miraculously fallen into the temple because it was attracted by images of the four Sugatas (Buddhas) which were already there. It claims that people “continuously arrived from the Gurjara country”, probably India, to worship here.

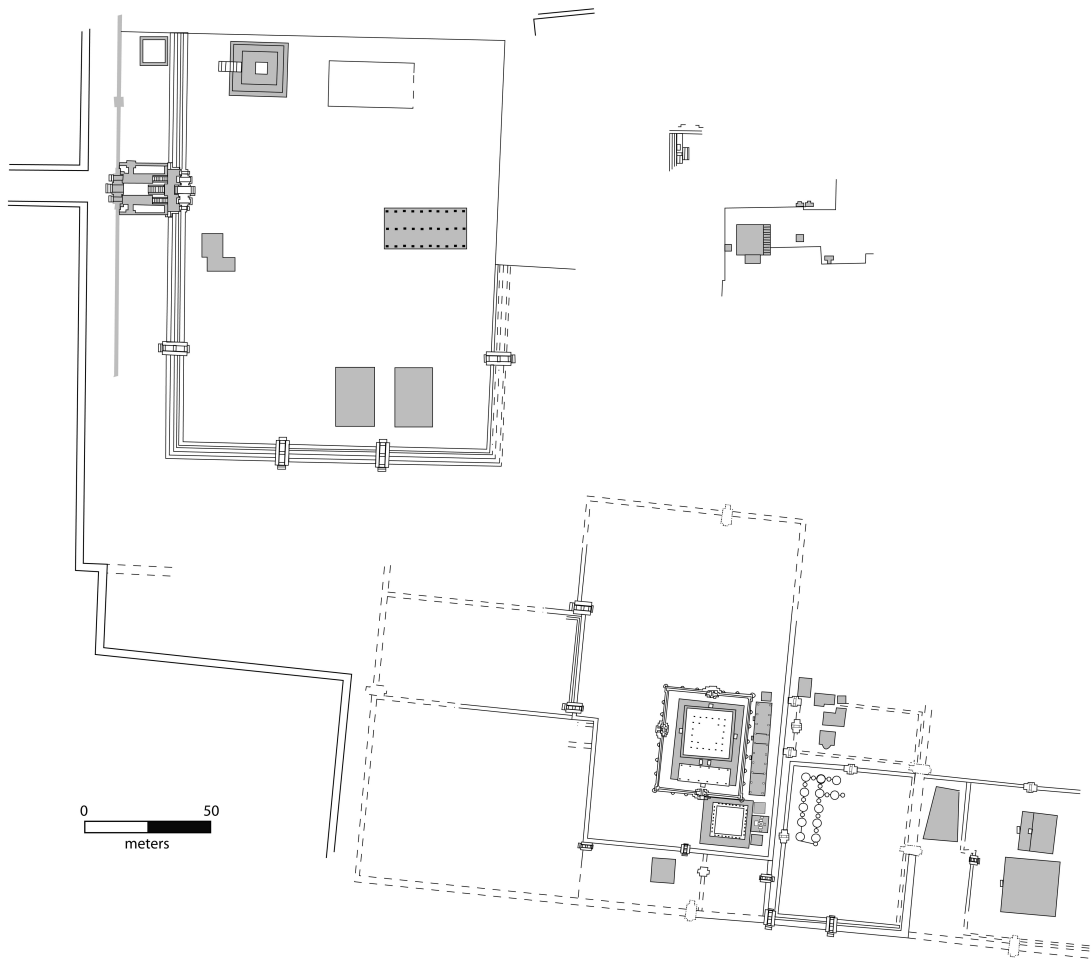
More than 50 short inscriptions at the site were carved around 840 to 860. These are names of donors; of 50 chapels in the innermost row around the two main shrines, 42 have names carved on them. Nineteen of these come from Sri Maharaja Raka I Pikatan; others were sponsored by the queen Sri Kahulunnan, and other officials. The names of donors in some cases seem to be written on buildings on the side of the complex nearest to their home areas. Plaosan may have been a mandala of the kingdom (Figure 5.19).<sup>317</sup>



**Figure 5.19** Plaosan donor figure, probably portraying Raka I Pikatan

### Ratubaka

The floodplain of the Opak River which flows near Prambanan is bounded on the east by the Siva Plateau, a limestone ridge. At the northwest tip on a cliff overlooking the valley including Prambanan is a complex of ruins named Ratubaka (a mythical “king who vanished”) (Figure 5.20). The site consists of



**Figure 5.20** Plan of Ratubaka

three sections. The first is surrounded by a monumental two-tiered stone wall with elaborate gateways on top of stone ramparts. Inside the gates is a large square field with stone foundations for wooden buildings, a rectangular pool, a well, and a terraced structure with a large square hole in the middle. The square resembles the entrance to a traditional Javanese palace. The foundations for wooden pavilions are common elements in these ensembles. The pool and terraced stone structure with a hole in the middle are unusual. It was once thought that the hole was used for the ashes of royal cremations, but this is now discounted. Ceremonial wells are found at several ancient palaces in Java; they may have been used in oath-taking ceremonies like the Sabukingking site in Palembang.

To the southeast is a second zone called the Palace with two stone platforms surrounded by a stone wall. East of this enclosure is a long stone platform which once had a closed wooden structure on top. At one end of this platform is a deep pool; at the other end are three miniature stone temples on a stone



base, with square channels cut into the base connected to a square pool. Farther east, on a lower terrace, are two walled enclosures, inside one of which is a group of round pools carved out of the bedrock; inside the other are some square pools. Next to the pools are the remains of a Buddhist stone stupa. Yet farther east on the same level are bases for enormous wooden pillars, and two stone platforms for pavilions with bases for linggas.

About 500 meters north of this zone is an ancient quarry in which several meditation caves have been cut from the rock. Two small pools are also located here.

The northwestern zone may have been a palace garden similar to those built at Talang Tuwo in South Sumatra a century earlier. Eighteenth-century palaces in Cirebon, Surakarta, and Yogyakarta carried on the tradition of constructing elaborate palace gardens.<sup>318</sup> The caves were meant for meditation. The Palace zone, however, was long a mystery. According to legend, one local king defeated another. To save her father, the defeated king's daughter agreed to marry her father's conqueror on one condition: that he build her 1,000 temples in one night. The victorious king was able to call on supernatural beings, who came out of the ground and built 999 temples. The princess woke the women in her palace and got them to pound rice. This was the sound which heralded the dawn in ancient Java. Roosters began to crow. The king's demonic assistants could not be abroad in daylight, and thinking that the sun was about to rise, they disappeared. The king in anger turned the deceitful princess into a stone statue in one of the temples. This story connects the Ratubaka site with the Siva temple at Prambanan. Supposedly this zone was King Baka's palace; the statue of Durga in Prambanan was the princess. Europeans who visited the site in the early nineteenth century tended to accept this story as fact.

During restoration of the stone platform next to the walled "palace" in the 1950s, fragments of an inscription came to light. It is dated 792 like the inscription of Sewu, and mentions Dharmottunggadeva. It commemorates the foundation of "This Abhayagiri *vihara* here of the Sinhalese ascetics, trained in the sayings of discipline of the Best of the Jinas"<sup>319</sup> which is dedicated to a bodhisattva who may either be Avalokitesvara or Manjusri. The walled enclosure was probably a double meditation platform of the type built at Abhayagiri in Sri Lanka around the same period. The Buddhism practiced there was highly secretive. Apparently the monks did not use statuary or build stupas (Figure 5.21).

The future Jayavarman II may have been living in central Java at this time. An inscription at Sab Bak, Cambodia, dated 1066, 14 years after the Sdok Kak Thom inscription recounting Jayavarman II's oath to free Cambodia from Java, records that a "magician Sri Satyavarman" long ago had set up nine statues of Buddha-Lokesvara on Abhayagiri which would prevent Java from oppressing Kambuja. The statues had decayed, and Satyavarman's descendants repaired them. It is possible that this is a reference to Ratubaka.<sup>320</sup>

A Javanese monk named Bianhong studied in Chang 'an with a Chinese monk Huiguo (746–805 CE), whose disciples included the Japanese monk Kukai, who founded Shingon Buddhism in Japan. Bianhong went to China in 780 to be consecrated into a Tantric sect. The type of script used for the Nagari inscriptions of central Java may have been brought back from China by Bianhong.<sup>321</sup>

The plateau went through several phases of development from the late eighth to the mid-ninth centuries. The monastery may have been established by Buddhist Sailendras in the late eighth century, and converted into a fort when Balaputra rebelled against Raka i Pikatan and his Buddhist queen. Five



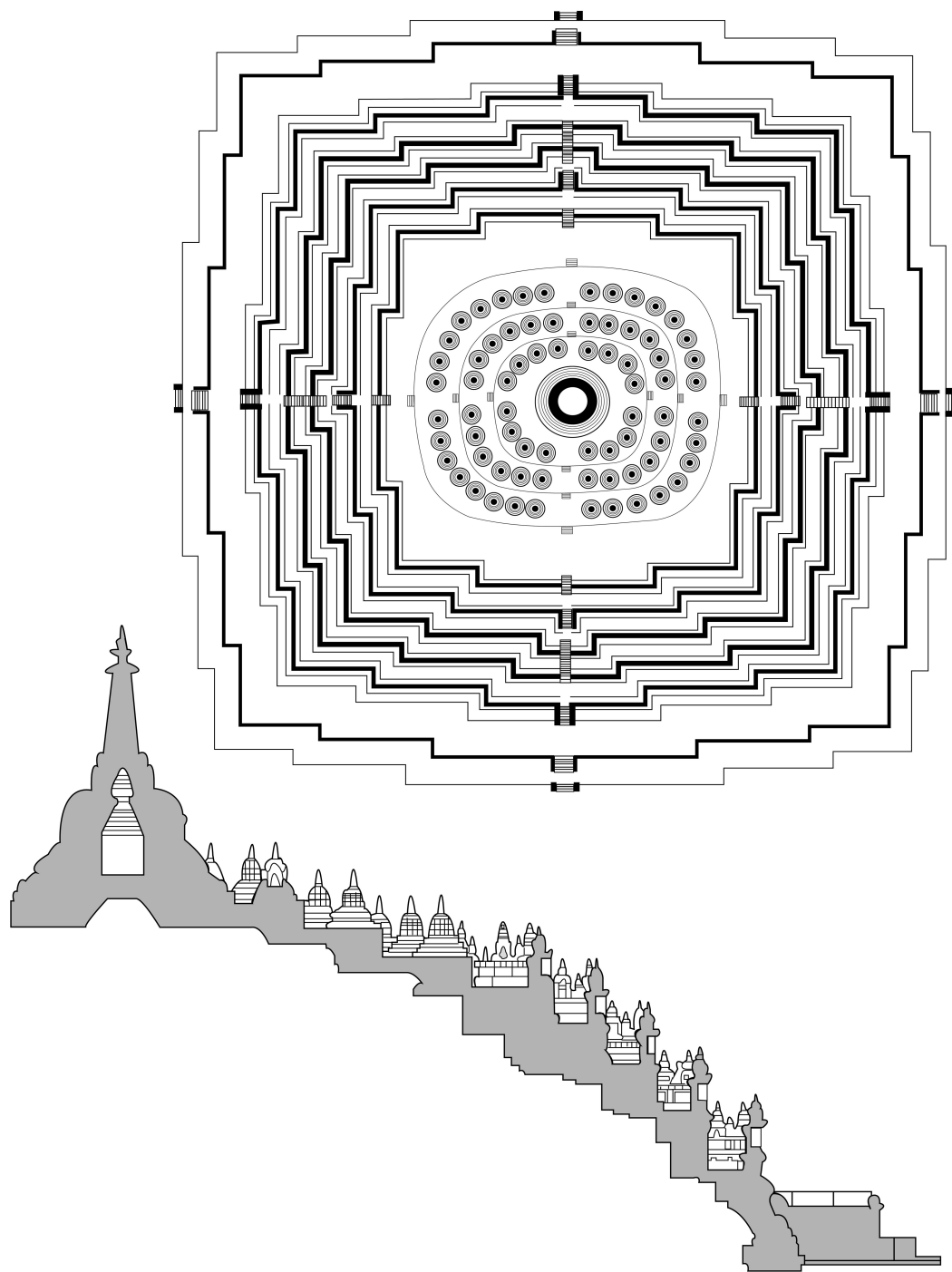
**Figure 5.21** Entrance to “Ratu Boko’s Palace”, actually a double meditation platform inspired by similar structures at Abhayagiri Vihara, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka

inscribed miniature *linggas* placed at symbolic locations around the foot of the plateau glorify Siva in war-like manifestations. They date from around 856 CE and probably symbolize Pikatan’s victory. The Siva sanctuaries in the southeastern part of the site were probably built as part of this religious conversion. The stupa was probably demolished at this time.

## Borobudur

Borobudur (often spelled Barabudur), a massive structure which by some measures is the largest single Buddhist monument in the world, stands on a low hill in the Kedu Plain near Gunung Wukir, on the opposite side of Merapi from the majority of ancient central Javanese monuments (Figure 5.22). In the mid-eighth century the hilltop was levelled to provide a flat space for two terraces which incorporated perspective effects typical of Hindu architecture in Java. The site was then abandoned for some time before work resumed which converted the structure to a Buddhist monument. The architect eliminated the perspective effects (which were associated with Hinduism) and added three square terraces, two round terraces, and a central stupa. The resulting structure was an original Javanese framework for a monument devoted to an imported religion. Nothing precisely like it has ever been built elsewhere, although the terraced pyramid model was adapted in Cambodia, at Roluos and Angkor.





**Figure 5.22** Borobudur plan and cross-section

No record of the founding or the sponsor of the monument, or even its original name, has been found. The meaning of the word “Borobudur” can only be conjectured. A logical guess is that it originally formed part of a longer phrase referring to a mountain where one might accumulate enough merit to become a *bodhisattva* by progressing through 10 stages. An inscription dated 824 CE mentions that King Samaratunga built a “place for the conqueror Buddhas” which was divided into 10 parts. An inscription of 842 says that Queen Sri Kahulunan granted *sima* status to a village to support a sanctuary named Bhumisambhara, “mountain of the accumulation of the 10 merits” or “perfections” (on the path to becoming a bodhisattva).<sup>322</sup>

The genius of the creators of Borobudur is that they managed to combine numerous symbolic elements in one harmonious structure. It is at once a multi-tiered terraced structure like the prehistoric religious sites of Indonesia; a *mandala* with concentric rows of sculptures representing Buddhist deities; a symbol of royal might composed of more than two million large blocks of stone; and a device for inculcating wisdom through its gallery of 1,350 narrative reliefs. Borobudur was built while Mahayana Buddhist ideology was evolving, and revisions to the structure were no doubt made to accommodate them; access to the monument may have been increasingly restricted.

Some scholars<sup>323</sup> have rejected the theory that Borobudur was designed as a mandala. This assertion is based on the lack of vajra symbolism which they argue should be found if the monument was designed according to the Vajrayana school of thought, and that the distribution of Buddhas on the building does not correspond to any known pattern. As for the latter objection, there is no proof that such a pattern did *not* exist; much ancient Buddhist literature has been lost. The *Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan*, an early tenth-century Javanese Mahayana text, refers to the six types of Buddha images found at Borobudur. As for the former, Borobudur was probably not designed *only* as a mandala; it had several themes, not just one. In addition to creating a safe place for contemplation, it also was meant to provide an analogy for the pilgrim on the 10-fold path of the bodhisattva, to represent the mountain so potent in Javanese folklore, and to project the might of its sponsor.<sup>324</sup>

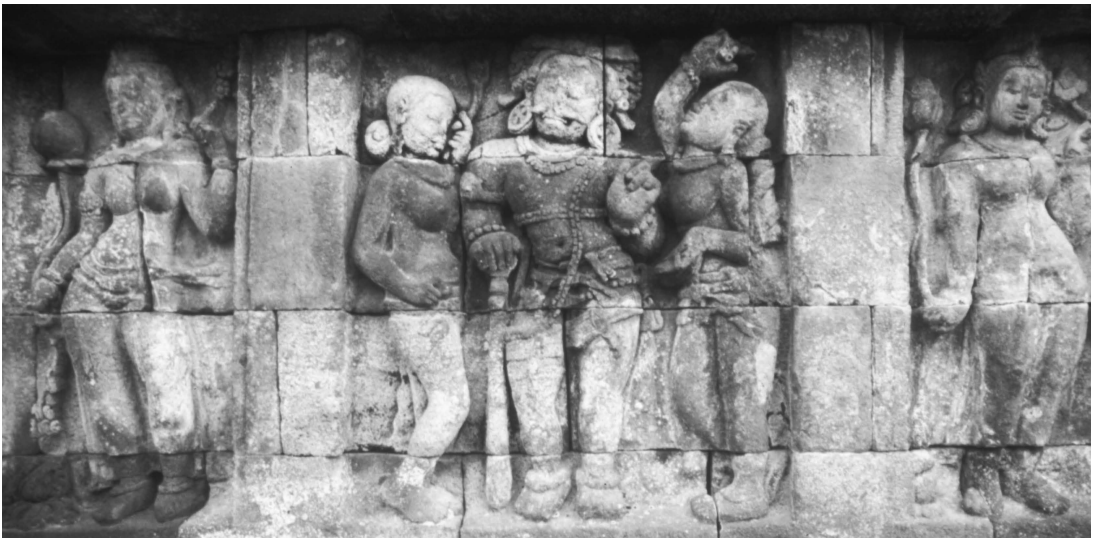
Four staircases lead to the stupa at the top of the monument. Originally, visitors could see a series of 160 reliefs on the foot of the building which illustrated the “Great Exposition of the Law of Karma”, a Sanskrit text which describes the law of fate. These had to be covered up at an early stage of construction because the monument was too narrow to support its height, so the base was widened. They were discovered and photographed in the nineteenth century, then covered again. Now the monument’s base is surrounded by a broad stone platform where pilgrims can perform ritual circumambulation (Figures 5.23 through 5.25).

The wall beside the platform is decorated with reliefs of the guardians of Mount Meru, *apsaras*, *naginis*, and *yaksinis*. On top of the walls of three of the four square stories are images of four of the five *Jina* (“conqueror”) Buddhas. The top wall has images of the fifth *Jina* on all sides.

The retaining walls on both sides of each gallery on the four square terraces are decorated with reliefs based on Sanskrit Buddhist texts. On the first gallery where the wall is higher, there are two series, upper and lower. The first series on the outer wall depicts stories from the previous lives of Buddha (*Jatakas*). The lower series on the inner wall depicts a mixture of stories (*Avadanas*), some about those who found enlightenment, others pure fairy tales. The upper series presents the life of the Buddha of the



**Figure 5.23** Borobudur relief: *Mahakarmavibhangga*



**Figure 5.24** Outer wall of first balustrade: drunken guard supported by two women

present age, Siddharta Gautama (*Lalitavistara*). The reliefs on the walls of the second and third galleries illustrate the *Gandavyuha*, the quest for enlightenment undertaken by a young man named Sudhana. In all, 460 panels are devoted to this theme. The bodhisattvas Manjusri and Samantabhadra play the leading roles in this story. The image of Manjusri in the first relief in which he appears is especially





**Figure 5.25** Borobudur relief: *Lalitavistara*, Queen Maya on her way to Lumbini Garden to give birth to the future Buddha

beautiful and full of character. It may depict the sponsor of the monument, the king who conceived and implemented the plan for this unique structure. The uppermost gallery is devoted to a sequel to the *Gandavyuha*, the *Bhadracari*. The other texts found on Borobudur have been depicted numerous times in Asian art, but this is the only series of reliefs devoted to the *Bhadracari*.

Once the visitor/pilgrim has seen all 1,350 reliefs in order (which requires circumambulating the monument 10 times, perhaps an analogy for the 10 stages on the path of the person who aspires to becoming a bodhisattva), one reaches three terraces which were once square, but at an early stage their corners were cut off to make them appear round. This must have some symbolic significance which we cannot rediscover. On these three terraces are 62 hollow stupas, each containing a statue of a Buddha in *dharmacakra* mudra symbolizing Buddha's first sermon. These stupas are divided into two types. Those on the first two levels have diamond-shaped holes through which the statues inside can be seen, while those on the upper terrace have square holes. Once again, some unknown symbolism is at work (Figure 5.26).

### Prambanan and the resurgence of Hinduism

A complex of Hindu temples near the village of Prambanan was consecrated in 856. The complex may originally have been named Lankapura.<sup>325</sup> Like Sewu and Plaosan, this group is designed around a



**Figure 5.26** Borobudur: round terraces and stupas

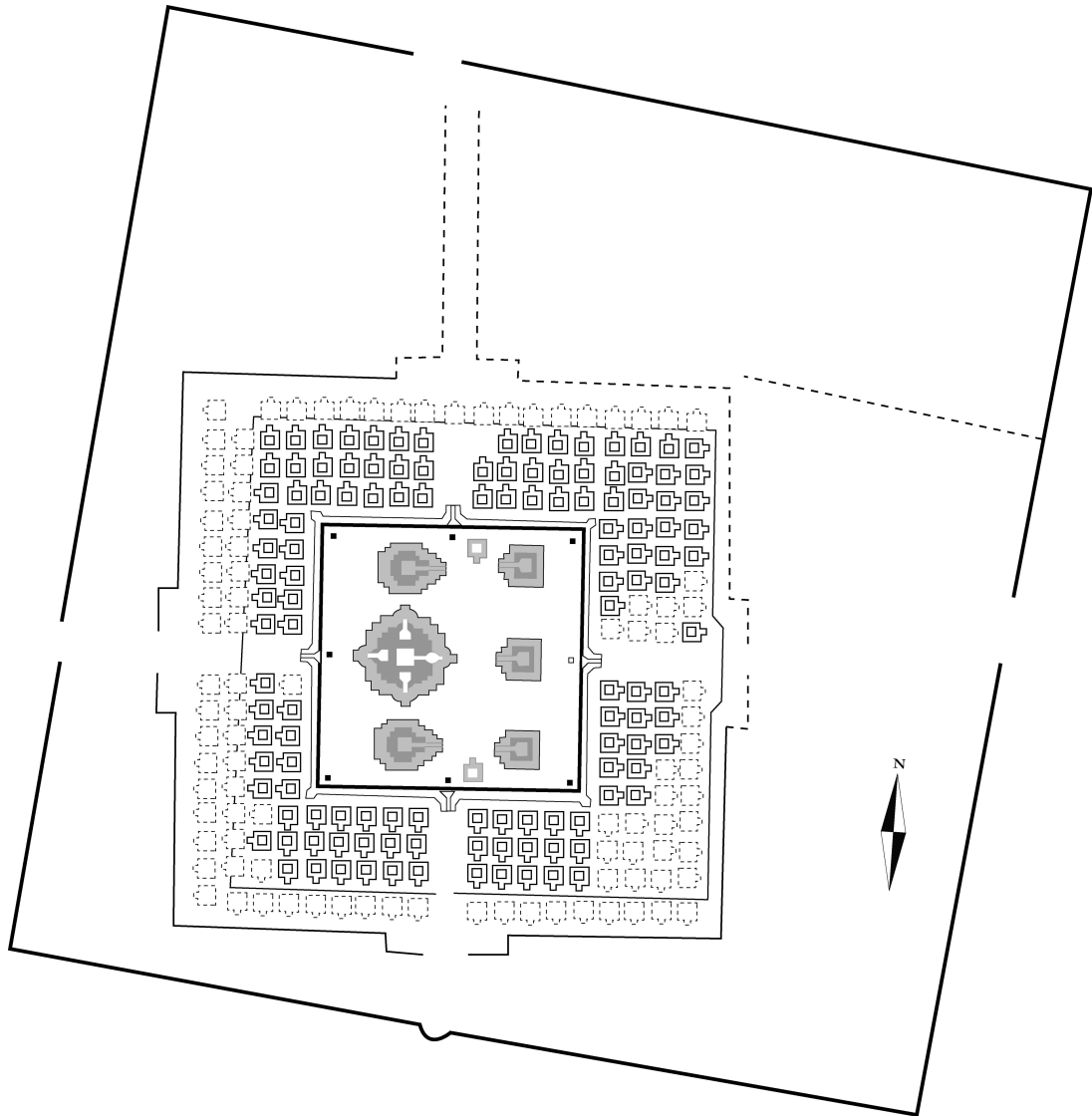
central courtyard surrounded by many chapels, in this case 224 (Figure 5.27). In the central courtyard are temples dedicated to Brahma and Visnu, with Siva in the middle. In the Siva temple stands an image of Siva Mahadeva on a tall base. Smaller cellae contain statues of Agastya, Ganesa, and Durga Slaying the Buffalo Demon. The other two main temples contain single cellae with statues of the appropriate god (Figure 5.28).

Like Borobudur, the balustrades of the three main shrines bear narrative reliefs; all are related to Visnu. The series begins on the Siva temple with the *Ramayana*, in which Visnu is incarnated as Rama in order to slay demons. The second half of the epic is shown on the Brahma temple. The Visnu temple depicts legends about Krisna; the text used as the source for the reliefs has not been identified.

The *Ramayana* was used as a source of inspiration for the reliefs of Angkor Wat and the Bayon when they were built 250 to 300 years later. In Java, *Ramayana* reliefs reappear in the fourteenth century (Figure 5.29).

## THE END OF THE EARLY CLASSIC PERIOD IN JAVA

Scholars differ on the relationship between Hinduism and Buddhism in ancient Java. Some, noting the use of similar artistic motifs, believe that the two religions cooperated peacefully. The Hindu king who



**Figure 5.27** Plan of Prambanan

founded the Prambanan Hindu complex also contributed to Buddhist shrines, together with his Buddhist queen. Others have suggested that Hinduism and Buddhism formed a syncretistic union in the Middle and Late Classic periods. Hariani Santiko shows these arguments to be fallacious by introducing evidence that, although one thirteenth-century king did indeed have himself commemorated in the same temple as both Siva and Buddha, the two religions remained officially and doctrinally distinct.<sup>326</sup> Late Classic Javanese inscriptions distinguish between three groups: the Buddhists, the Hindus, and the *rishi*, or ascetic hermits. It is likely that the priesthoods desired to differentiate themselves from their rivals, although the common people may not have cared about the fine points of doctrine.





**Figure 5.28** Prambanan central group



**Figure 5.29** Ramayana scene: Garuda brings Sita's ring to sorrowing Rama



**Figure 5.30** Sambisari: this temple was completely buried under volcanic ash and only rediscovered in the 1970s.

The construction of the Siva complex at Prambanan marked the culmination of Javanese architecture. No other building of this scale was erected in Java for almost 1,000 years. Inscriptions continued to be carved until the early tenth century, but thereafter the light of Early Classic civilization suddenly died. Numerous explanations have been proposed to account for the sudden extinction of a glorious artistic culture: external attack, perhaps from Sumatra; destructive volcanic eruptions; droughts; epidemics; all the usual suspects. Later inscriptions only refer vaguely to a *pralaya*, disaster. The Wonoboyo site, where a huge quantity of gold was buried around 900 under a layer of volcanic sand suggests that a volcanic eruption may be at least part of the explanation. Other temples such as Sambisari have been discovered completely intact beneath several meters of volcanic sand in the Yogyakarta area (Figure 5.30).

Research on the Early Classic period has been dominated by historians of art and texts. Little attention has been devoted to the study of Javanese ceramics<sup>327</sup> or settlement patterns. Many basic assumptions about this period may be revised if more data about these topics is recovered.

## EARLY CLASSIC BALI

In the seventh century, Bali was the most distant island in Indonesia of which the Chinese had any knowledge. The next country to the east, Locha, was inhabited by people with “the teeth of wild animals

and the claws of eagles”, according to Chang Jun, who went to the Siam-Malay peninsula in 607. Locha is probably from Sanskrit *raksasa*, “demons”.<sup>328</sup>

Yijing, who lived in Srivijaya for several years, had heard of *Po-li zhou*. The country had sent a mission in 630. A later Javanese text, the *Carita Parahyangan*, claims that Sanjaya conquered Bali in the eighth century, but there is no evidence to support this claim.

Balinese history begins with an inscription in Old Balinese dated 896. Both Buddhism and Hinduism were practiced on the island, but Bali maintained many of its prehistoric traditions. The village of Trunyan, which still disposes of the dead by exposing corpses on the ground, is mentioned in an inscription dated 911 which mentions a shrine for a local deity which may have been a 4-meter (13-foot)-tall statue still in Trunyan which depicts *Dewa Ratu Gede Pancering Jagat*, “The Great God who is the center of the world”. Ancestor worship played an important role in early historic Bali. A collection of statues at Mount Panulisan indicates the perpetuation of ancestor worship until the Postclassic era.

The first Indian reference to Bali is in the *Manjusri Mulakalpa*, written sometime before 920, which describes Bali as a place inhabited by barbarians. Early Balinese inscriptions mention a palace named Singhamandava. The first name of a Balinese king, Sri Kesarivarman, appears in 914 CE in an inscription from Sanur.

## CHAMPA: THE NORTHERN PHASE

Champa mandala of the Early Classic consisted of five distinct submandalas: Indrapura, the capital of a ninth-century dynasty (Dong Duong, near Hue); Amaravati (Quang Nam and Quang Ngai); Vijaya (Binh Dinh Province); Kauthara (Khanh Hoa in Nha Trang); and Panduranga (Thuan Hai).<sup>329</sup> Some sites existed in the late Preclassic or Protoclassic, as indicated by artifacts of the Sahuynh horizon.

Major Early Classic settlement sites include Tra Kieu, My Son, Thanh Ho, and Go Cam.<sup>330</sup> Tra Kieu is the most thoroughly studied site in the Thu Bon valley. A few sculptures believed to date from the first phase of appropriation of Indian art comprise a *yaksa* and a few heads tentatively dated to the fifth to sixth centuries, the late Protoclassic.<sup>331</sup>

### Champa in texts

Zhan Cheng, a name which became associated with Champa, was first mentioned in Chinese records when it sent tribute in 877.<sup>332</sup> The capital was then at Indrapura or Dong Duong.<sup>333</sup> Champa did not send tribute again until 958. The first two inscriptions which mention Champa, one in Cambodia and the other in My Son, date from the seventh century. The inscription in Cambodia mentions an envoy’s mission to Champa; the Cham inscription describes a prince’s visit to Sambor Prei Kuk, where he married King Isanavarman’s daughter. These two events are probably connected.

The Khmer inscription provides a glimpse of the complex nature of political organization in seventh-century Champa, characterized by numerous mandalas in the Thu Bon valley, Panduranga in the south, and Vijaya in Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh Province. These polities referred to themselves as



*campanagara*, *campapura*, and *campadesa* (Champa country, city, and region).<sup>334</sup> This probably reflects a situation in which several mandalas were struggling to form a larger mandala. Chinese and Vietnamese used a single term, Zhan Cheng, to refer to Champa, contributing to the confusion.

Another notable question pertains to whether Protoclassic Lin Yi was the predecessor of Early Classic Zhan Cheng (Champa) and whether it was Cham. Vickery does not think so. He argues that the Thu Bon valley polity expanded north and engulfed the area which was formerly Lin Yi in the sixth and seventh centuries; as a result, the later Chinese records referred to the Thu Bon capital at Tra Kieu as Lin Yi.<sup>335</sup> Twelfth-century Chinese records support this view: a Chinese official in Guangxi wrote in 1175 that “Linyi is present-day Zhan Cheng.” Three years later, another official, Zhou Qufei, made a similar connection.<sup>336</sup>

An important change occurred in the mid-eighth century when epigraphic and architectural remains at My Son and Tra Kieu came to an abrupt end, and were supplanted by new temple construction and inscriptions in the south, in Panduranga (Nha Trang and Phan Rang). The north was not abandoned, but became less economically and politically significant. The shift might have been correlated with changes in sailing routes which favoured ports in the south.

While Panduranga flourished in the ninth century, relations between Champa and Cambodia were characterized by conflict. Cham raids into Cambodia between 813 and 817 brought back plunder, some of which was donated to a temple in Nha Trang. The Cham raids may have been a factor in the demise of the south Mekong and the appearance of a new capital near Angkor, even though one Khmer inscription claimed victory over the Chams. Despite its prominence in the ninth century, Panduranga was not known to the Chinese. Chinese records continued to refer to a polity in the north, but in the ninth century it was referred to as Huan Wang.<sup>337</sup>

In the mid-ninth century, the Thu Bon valley experienced a resurgence in monument construction and epigraphy. A new temple complex was established in Dong Duong, ruled by esoteric Buddhists who built Buddhist temples as far north as Quang Binh. Chinese records ceased to refer to Huan Wang and began referring to Zhan Cheng at this time. Northward expansion continued through the tenth century, ultimately bringing Zhan Cheng into conflict with Annam. Cham invasions of Annam led to retaliatory attacks and loss of territory in Quang Tri and Quang Binh to Annam.<sup>338</sup> Conflict between Champa and Annam continued unabated into the next century.

Ninth-century Champa marked a short period of esoteric Buddhist activity, but Early Classic architectural and sculptural traditions demonstrate the existence of an interaction sphere in which artistic and religious ideas and motifs circulated dynamically.

## Religion in Champa

Cham religion comprised Buddhism, Hinduism, and indigenous beliefs. Ancestor worship was manifested in the cult of *kut*, funerary steles characterizing ancestors. Saivism was readily adapted by Champa kings such as Bhadravarman, who erected icons of gods such as Siva and named them after themselves. This emphasized the link between kingship and the gods, and resonated with the practice of ancestral worship through the erection of stone steles.

Vaisnavism appeared in Champa in the Protoclassic but never became dominant. Most statues and textual references to Visnu appeared in the mid-seventh century, after which few allusions to Visnu appear.<sup>339</sup>

Saivism was the dominant religion in Champa. Siva is commonly represented by the *lingga* (a phallic symbol) and *mukhalinga* (*lingga* with a face). One particularly characteristic Cham device is the *kosa*, a sheath made of gold or silver, bearing a carved face of the god, which was designed to cover the top of a stone *lingga*. These covers were particularly popular between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. They are not found elsewhere in Seasia, and are rare in India. One text describes a gold *kosa* with four faces (*caturmukha*) and another gold *kosa* with six faces, each depicted with a cobra crown set with a precious gem.<sup>340</sup> The gold used to produce this piece is supposed to have weighed 17 kilograms.

*Kosa* are mentioned only in royal dedications for sites associated with kings, such as My Son, Po Nagar of Nha Trang, and Dong Duong. It has been suggested that the faces on the *kosa* may be portraits of Cham kings.

Buddhism began to assume more importance in Champa during the Early Classic. Buddhist artifacts in Champa include terracotta votive tablets and bronze statuettes of Avalokitesvara. The presence of votive tablets which resembled those found in Myanmar and Thailand suggests contact between these polities. Mahayana Buddhism, especially the esoteric branch of Vajrayana, became a dominant religion in the ninth century in Dong Duong. The king, however, continued to support Saivism and did not view Saivism or Vaisnavism as antithetical to Buddhism. This coexistence is reflected in Cham architecture and inscriptions. An inscription of 829 near Phan Rang describes the establishment of two structures, one Buddhist and the other Saivite, in the same location. In 911 a minister sponsored the building of two sanctuaries, one dedicated to Siva and the other to Avalokitesvara. A foundation stele of a Buddhist temple in Dong Duong contains a long exaltation of Siva or Bhadresvara.<sup>341</sup>

King Indravarman played an important role in making Buddhism a dominant religion in his capital in Indrapura between the ninth and tenth centuries. He promoted the practice of esoteric Mahayana Buddhism which emphasized meditation and recitation of *mantras*, but made no attempt to make Buddhism the state religion.

During the ninth and early tenth centuries, religious exchanges between Champa and Java intensified. Champa began to appropriate Buddhist influence from Sailendra Java, which was reflected in texts as well as art and architecture. The worship of Vairocana, Sakyamuni, Amitabha, Tara, and Vajrapani suggest parallels with Javanese Sailendra beliefs.

Buddhism expanded under the patronage of the Indrapura kings. The Indrapura kings accumulated considerable wealth from maritime trade during the declining phase of the Tang dynasty, which also affected Annam. Much of this revenue was channelled into Buddhist architecture and ritual.

## Architecture of Champa

Inscriptions demonstrate that a majority of structures constructed during the Protoclassic were made of wood. At the beginning of the Early Classic, the Cham began to construct temples of brick, then temples combining brick and sandstone, mainly temple-towers (*prasada*). The residences, rest-houses,

guard posts, fortifications, and other subsidiary buildings were still wooden. None of these structures survives.<sup>342</sup>

Three main temple complexes remain from the Early Classic: My Son, Po Nagar in Nha Trang, and Dong Duong. The first two consist of Hindu structures, while Dong Duong was Buddhist. All three sites benefited from royal patronage. The temple complexes of My Son and Po Nagar were built over several periods. The Buddhist sanctuary at Dong Duong in contrast was constructed all at one time in 825 CE (Figures 5.31 through 5.33).<sup>343</sup>

Cham architects chose sites for temples near rivers or springs, either the domain of a powerful god or spirit or a place associated with a major historical or mythological event. Each temple is enclosed within walls with gateways (*gopura* in Sanskrit), a central shrine (*kalan*), a small edifice to the southwest of the main shrine, a small structure containing the foundation stele at one corner, and an assembly hall (*mandapa*) just outside the gateway and facing the central shrine.<sup>344</sup> All were constructed according to a square plan with an entrance facing east, except in My Son where topography affected the orientation of the individual sanctuaries.

Cham sanctuaries typically comprised three buildings arranged on a north-south axis; the temple in the center may not be the main shrine. This particular configuration appears to have evolved in the Middle Classic, at the end of the twelfth century, possibly as the result of influence from Angkor.<sup>345</sup>

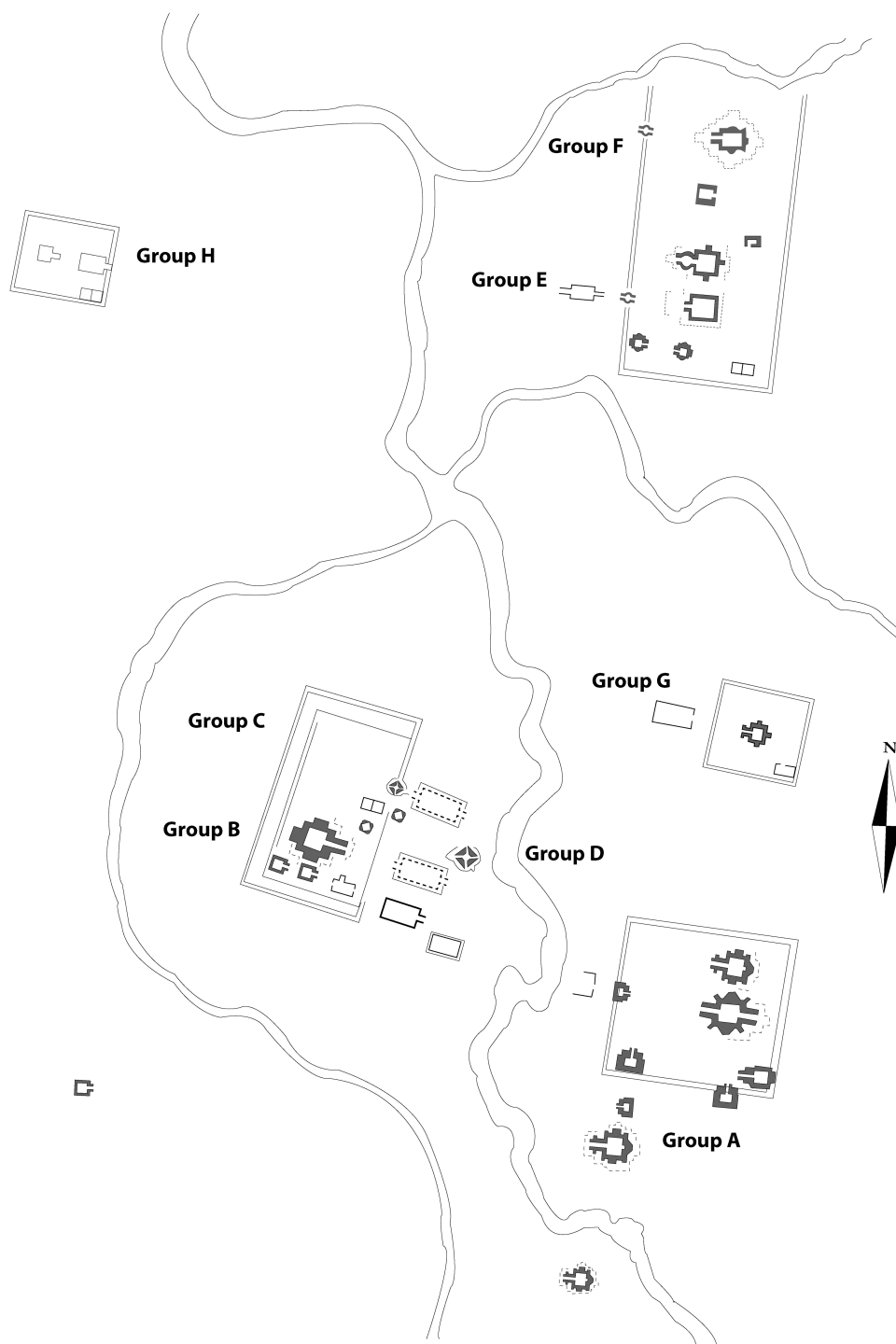
Cham architects utilized corbel technology like that used elsewhere in Seasia except Myanmar, where the true arch was used. Only one temple in Champa (at My Son) was made completely of stone; all the rest were made of brick with some stone elements, including lintels, tympana, cornices, friezes, pillars, pediments, and false doors. The Cham used resin from the *Dipterocarpus alatus* Roxb. tree as a binding agent to join the bricks. This resin is still used in boat construction. Once the building was completed, the exterior of the structure was polished and decoration was carved on the bricks.<sup>346</sup> Unlike other parts of Seasia, no plaster coating was applied.

Architectural motifs on the temples' exteriors usually comprise false doors on three sides, with carved or sculpted motifs such as floral motifs, pilasters, pediments, and lintels. The façades also were decorated with carved floral patterns, animals (monkeys and elephants) as well as gods and ascetics. Stones were sometimes incorporated into the exterior façades and inside the main shrine, usually at the base, and were usually carved, representing statue bases or altars (Figure 5.34).<sup>347</sup>

Scholars have identified four different stages in the development of Champa's architectural tradition. Most scholars agree that the first period of Champa brick architecture appeared between the seventh and eighth centuries, represented by Hindu buildings in northern Champa. Epigraphic evidence indicates that most of the structures dating to this period at My Son were low brick walls with superstructures consisting of wooden roofs supported on wooden pillars; square stone pillar bases still remain at the four corners of these buildings. An example of a temple constructed in this period is My Son E1, which has a stone base, low brick wall, and a wooden superstructure decorated with terracotta roof tiles.<sup>348</sup> The pediment from the E1 sanctuary dated to the eighth century depicts a reclining Visnu (Figure 5.35).

Some scholars define the second period as architecture built between the late eighth and mid-ninth centuries, when corbel technology and false doors began to be incorporated into the buildings. The structures still had low roofs, though the buildings were larger than those built in the first period. Brick





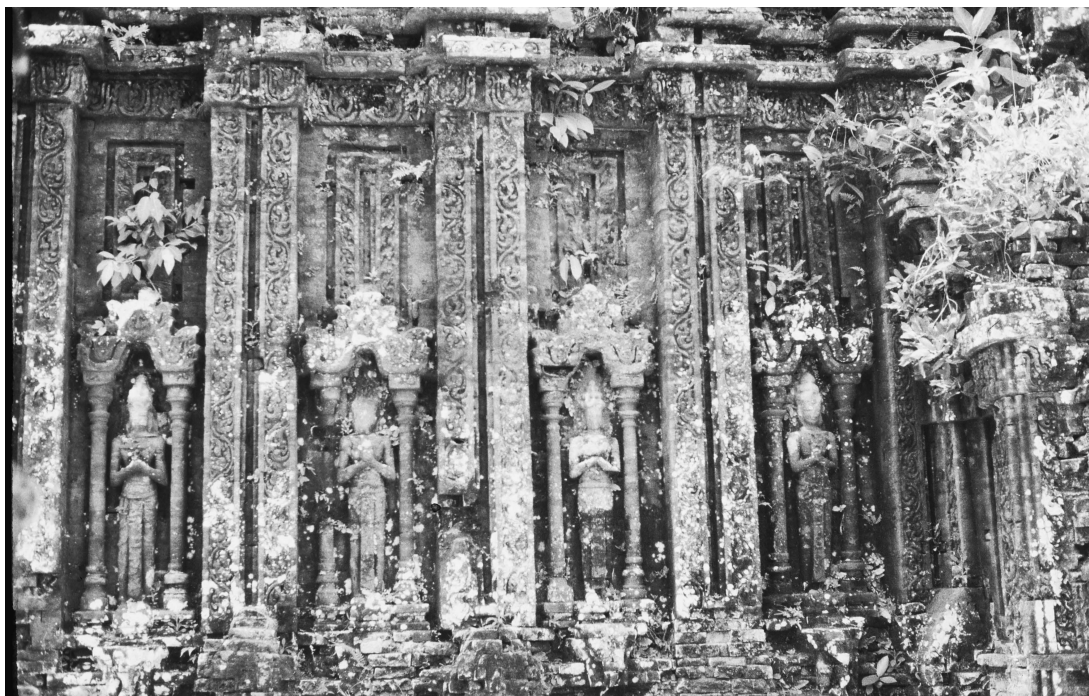
**Figure 5.31** Plan of My Son



**Figure 5.32** My Son towers with Cat's Tooth Mountain



**Figure 5.33** Relief of female polo players. The context of this relief is unknown, but it strongly suggests that this was an actual scene in early Classic Champa.



**Figure 5.34** Carved façade of Temple B5, My Son



**Figure 5.35** Sleeping Visnu



was the main material, though sandstone was utilized for decoration. Temples constructed in this phase include the main temple in the Phu Hai tower group and several temples at Po Dam and Hoa Lai. The oldest Cham buildings from Panduranga in the south dated from the reign of Harivarman between 802 and 803. There are three *kalan* structures in Hoa Lai, which display strong connections with Early Classic Khmer architecture. Prasat Damrei Krap on Phnom Kulen, conversely, represents an example of early Cham architecture in Cambodia.<sup>349</sup>

Certain scholars provide a different time frame for temples of the second stage. Schweyer suggests that this stage dates from 875 to the eleventh century, based on ornate decoration such as florets, garlands, crosses, and other floral motifs on the façades, and architectural details. Schweyer refers to this as Dong Duong style.<sup>350</sup> Indravarman III constructed a large Mahayana Buddhist complex there, dedicated to Laksmindralokesvara, a complex name combining the names of Visnu's consort Laksmi and King Indravarman. Architecture of this period has been characterized as exhibiting disregard for "classic sense for line and proportion".<sup>351</sup> Structures of this period in My Son include B2 to B4, A10 to A13, A4, E2, E3, and E5. This style is unique and extravagant.

The third period according to most scholars is represented by the architecture of the Indrapura dynasty built from the mid-ninth until the end of the tenth century. This stage is marked by many impressive Buddhist and Hindu structures, especially in northern Champa. A preponderance of structures exhibits walled enclosures and square ground plans. Sandstone was also utilized more, particularly for supporting weight. This stage also saw fluid exchanges between Champa, Cambodia, and Java.<sup>352</sup> An early example of this architecture was built in Khuong My, southeast of Dong Duong. Cham architecture of this period also showed a fusion of Cham, Central Javanese, and Khmer influence. Examples of Central Javanese influence in Cham art and architecture are reflected in the kala-makara niches and kinnara sculpture. Sculptures found in Tra Kieu also represented examples of highly refined expressions of these influences.<sup>353</sup> An alternative chronology identifies the third stage as the period between the end of the eleventh through the twelfth centuries, marked by the predominance of Vijaya and the penetration of Khmer artistic style, including the wholesale appropriation of certain Khmer conventions.<sup>354</sup>

Although classifications of Cham architecture differ in periodization and the variables used to differentiate each stage, the mid-ninth century marked an important turning point. In the Middle Classic, Champa became more involved in a network which incorporated Cambodia and Java. The expansion of building in northern Champa after the mid-ninth century is probably partially correlated with the geopolitical situation in Vietnam.

## PROTECTORATE OF ANNAM

During the Tang dynasty, Chinese imperial headquarters shifted south of the Red River to Hanoi. In 679 CE, a Tang governor formed several protectorates to guard China's frontiers. The Protectorate of Annam ("Pacified South")<sup>355</sup> was one of these; others were located in Korea, Mongolia, and the Tarim Basin. Authority over civil and military matters was vested in a protector general.<sup>356</sup> The Protectorate of Annam was divided into provinces, eight of which later formed the core of independent Vietnam.

Tang records described repeated rebuilding, repair, and expansion of walls and ramparts around Hanoi. The walls of Hanoi were breached during an uprising in 687. In 722, rebels overran Annam before they were suppressed by reinforcements. Hanoi was again overrun in 767 by a group from overseas, probably Indonesia.<sup>357</sup> After the invaders were expelled, a new citadel called La Thanh was built.<sup>358</sup> At the end of the eighth century, Hanoi was again severely damaged and rebuilt; the site was renamed Dai La, “big wall”.<sup>359</sup> Between the 770s and 780s, military commanders who administered the Protectorate included local men such as Phung Hung. The Phung family governed Dai La until 791, when the Tang court sent a new protector general.<sup>360</sup>

Dai La’s wall had a perimeter of 6.4 kilometers and was 7.5 meters in height, and enclosed guard posts, courtyards, roads, a few thousand buildings, a water drainage system, and a 4.5-meter-high dyke. Excavations between 2002 and 2009 in an area of 19,000 square meters unearthed large quantities of artifacts from a long period of occupation. Artifacts found include roof tiles bearing human faces, lotus motifs, flat tiles with human and animal faces, and *yin yang*. One tile bears a face and the Chinese character for king.<sup>361</sup> Tiles with human faces are very similar to those found in Buu Chau, Tra Kieu, which probably were made during the Han dynasty. Other finds include ceramics, both locally produced as well as examples imported from China and West Asia. Buddhist pilgrims often passed through Hanoi.

The Nhan Stupa in Nghe An, north-central Vietnam, in use through the Early Classic period, comprises a square brick foundation and a paved brick yard. During the Sui dynasty, the Chinese emperor Wendi sent envoys bearing relics to a local chief who donated them to the Phap Van pagoda and other temples in Nghe An and Ha Tinh. The bricks bore decorations of elephants and lions, and in one case, a relief of three Buddhas in *dhyana mudra* sitting on a lotus throne. Other decorative motifs include *kala* heads and faces of animals and humans. A reliquary recovered from the site consisted of a golden box containing ashes, burnt rice grains, and two small white balls.<sup>362</sup>

Few buildings remain to provide a clear idea of north Vietnamese Protoclassic art and architecture, but after the establishment of the Protectorate of Annam, structures began to exhibit more Sinicized elements. There were probably differences in degrees of influence based on distance from China. Chinese sources say that the population of Annam conformed to Chinese ways of life, which suggests that Chinese influences became stronger from the seventh century, but Buddhist pagodas continued to reflect indigenous traditions.

During the Protectorate, Chinese gods were introduced into Annam with official support, but Buddhism persisted. In 820 a Chinese donor established the Vo Ngon Thong School, which became popular during the Dai Viet period. This Buddhist school was influenced by Chan (Zen) Buddhism created by Bodhidharma in the sixth century, which emphasized meditation described as “wall contemplation”.<sup>363</sup>

## THE NINTH-CENTURY CRISIS

Annam became increasingly unstable in the ninth century. After the An Lushan rebellion (755), the Tang Empire lifted restrictions on land ownership. Some indigenous families grew powerful. The elites in these families were divided: some, especially those from Giao, were loyal to the Tang court, but others

from the highlands and the south were interested in establishing indigenous rule. The gradual decline of the Tang government encouraged bordering polities in Nanzhao (modern Yunnan) and Champa to engage in more aggressive behavior.

In 820 a commander captured Dai La and killed the protector general and his followers. This initiated a period of instability marked by short interludes of order. Nanzhao raids created chaos in the late 840s and early 850s. Local leaders, especially in the southern provinces, began contemplating setting up their own mandalas. Nanzhao launched a full-scale invasion of Annam in 862; Tang forces were routed, Dai La fell, and La Thanh was destroyed. Nanzhao troops plundered the plain, but Tang reinforcements retook Dai La in 865. The Tang court abolished the Protectorate soon afterward.<sup>364</sup> Tang officials remained at Dai La until 880 but had little authority over the new regional elite.

In 880 the Tang court withdrew their garrisons; as Tang China disintegrated, local elites competed for control of the region. The Khuc family emerged as the dominant ruling class in the Red River plain. Khuc posed as officials of a now defunct Tang empire, rather than establishing their own dynasty.<sup>365</sup> Gao Pian (Cao Bien), a military commander appointed by the Tang court, re-established order in Dai La and rebuilt the capital; Dai La remained the political center of Annam for at least 80 years.

## AFTER ANNAM: THE FOUNDATION OF INDEPENDENT VIETNAM

Following the demise of the Tang dynasty in 906, Annam went through a long period of upheaval. In 930 the Southern Han kingdom attacked Annam and the Khuc family crumbled. Southern Han forces advanced as far as Tra Kieu in Cham territory. Ruling groups in the southern provinces led by Duong Dinh Nghe organized opposition and retook Dai La. Duong took the role of governor,<sup>366</sup> but elites of the north continued to struggle for control of the mandala.

Conflict between Dai La and Phong (Me Linh, associated with the Trung sisters) led to the death of Duong at the hands of Phong leader Kieu, with Southern Han assistance. Kieu was in turn killed by Ngo Quyen, who was stationed in the southern provinces. An event associated with this episode is commemorated in the history of Chinese-Viet relations. Ngo defeated the Southern Han fleet on the Bach Dang River in late 938 by planting iron-tipped poles in the bed of the river. When the Southern Han fleet arrived, the Vietnamese lured the bigger Chinese ships into the estuary. When the tide receded, the heavy Chinese ships were trapped and destroyed.<sup>367</sup> This event joined the heroism of the Trung sisters as part of the narrative of Sino-Vietnamese relations.

Ngo established a court modelled after China from titles and ritual etiquette to dress and moved his capital from Dai La (Hanoi) to ancient Co Loa in the Hoa Lu valley. Dai La continued to be an important node in trade and other networks. Archaeological excavation at Hoa Lu has yielded numerous architectural features such as decorated terracotta floor tiles and remains of more esoteric Buddhism.<sup>368</sup>

In 965 (the Middle Classic), Bo Linh assumed the throne and proclaimed himself king, then emperor. He named his new kingdom Dai Co Viet. This act is regarded by Vietnamese as the foundation of independent Vietnam. Dai Viet began to develop into an independent polity between the mid-tenth and



mid-eleventh centuries. The Middle Classic center of power shifted from Hoa Lu back to the Red River, first in the uplands, and later back to the central zone, where Dai La was located.

## NOTES

- 1 Coedès 1964: 5.
- 2 R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka 1920: 403; Damais 1957: 633.
- 3 G. Maspero 1928: 97.
- 4 Vickery 1998: 29.
- 5 Coedès 1930: 34–35.
- 6 Bronson and Wisseman 1976; Surastopo and Sutikno 1985; Manguin 1987, 1993a.
- 7 For example, the *Old History of the T'ang Dynasty* writing of *Ka-ling* (*He-ling*, Java); Groeneveldt 1960: 12.
- 8 Hirth and Rockhill 1911: 6.
- 9 Wallace 1869: 94.
- 10 McGee 1967.
- 11 Pere de Premare, S.J., 1699, quoted in Reid 1980: 241.
- 12 Fletcher 1986, 2009 for Angkor; Hudson 2004 described the same phenomenon for Bagan.
- 13 Wilson 1975: 34.
- 14 Macdonald 1982: 258.
- 15 Welch 1984: 143 added the criterion that ramparts should be more than 2 meters high to qualify as fortifications.
- 16 Vallibhotama 1984; Boyd 2007.
- 17 An early exponent of this theory was Coe 1961.
- 18 It takes 3,214 calories to move one metric ton 1 kilometer by portaging, whereas to transport the same load in a canoe by paddling requires 588 calories; Drennan 1984.
- 19 Sanders and Santley 1983.
- 20 Miksic 2009a.
- 21 Bray 1983: 187.
- 22 See Freidel 1983: 386, and Tambiah 1977, especially footnote, page 91, in which he discusses the applicability of central-place models to the formation of mandalas in Seasia.
- 23 Soekmono 1974: 1–34; Ślaczka 2006.
- 24 Michel 1988: Chapter 4.
- 25 de Casparis 1991: 35.
- 26 Aung Thwin 1979.
- 27 Murphy 2010.
- 28 Michel 1988: Chapter 3.
- 29 Sandhu 173: 24.
- 30 Puri 2013/1956: 178.
- 31 Clarke 1968.
- 32 Wilen 1984: 7. Wheatley 1983: 11–20 discusses this problem in detail.
- 33 Webb 1975: 157, 168, 190.
- 34 Kijngam et al. 1980: 80.
- 35 Wilen 1982–83.
- 36 This latter shortcoming also applied to their use of Theissen polygons (which Wheatley 1983: 216–218 also criticizes).
- 37 Chantaratiyakarn 1984b.

- 38 For example, Wheatley 1983: 294.
- 39 Fox 1971: 28.
- 40 For a review of anthropological and historical theories of the Seasian state, see Day 2002: 1–37. For Day’s own definition of the state, see page 34.
- 41 Bronson 1979: 325.
- 42 Hill 1977: 101.
- 43 Riggs 1976.
- 44 Kulke 1995: 1.
- 45 Kulke 1995: 11.
- 46 Southall 1956.
- 47 Stein 1977, 1980.
- 48 Tambiah 1977:69 notes that in Indo-Tibetan tradition the word can be divided into two elements: a core, *manda*, and a container, *la*.
- 49 Griffiths 2013: 63.
- 50 de Casparis 1955: 67 translated *mandala* here as “provinces”; Griffiths 2013: 59 footnote 38 translated it as “orbit”. Kulke 1993:180 defined it as “(tributary) chieftaincy”, but in the same article he defines it as “a *kuo* or *mandala*-like polity”. He also refers to “the chiefs of the central *mandala* Srivijaya” (p. 179).
- 51 See list in Damais 1957: 617; Griffiths 2013: 59.
- 52 Christie 1995: 239.
- 53 Mabbett 1971: 20, 34–39, 54–66.
- 54 The persistence of this pattern in the late nineteenth century is described in Gullick 1958.
- 55 Chutintaranond 1990: 89 explicates “the theory of *mandala*, understood as a classical policy of interstate politics” in Classic India.
- 56 Chutintaranond 1990: 90.
- 57 Woodward 2005: 353. He also wrote that “the term [*mandala*] has become so overworked in Seasian historiography and has become so imprecise in meaning that it might best be avoided.”
- 58 Tambiah 1977.
- 59 Wolters 1982, 1999: 27–40.
- 60 Hagestijn 1989: 116–121.
- 61 Vickery 1998: 195, 200.
- 62 Goh 2015.
- 63 Wheatley 1961, p. 27.
- 64 *Makhadeva*, also perhaps *Susima*, *Culla Sutasoma*, *Nimi Jatakas*.
- 65 “Interview with Benedict Anderson”, in *Inside Indonesia* 54, April-June 1998. Prof. Anderson was unsure whether this was an ancient expression, or one made up toward the end of Dutch rule; he was under the impression that such an act “never happened in Javanese chronicles”.
- 66 According to the *Pararaton*.
- 67 Mills 1970.
- 68 Wheatley 1973: 103 footnote 257.
- 69 Soekmono 1974, 1995.
- 70 Ślaczka 2006, 2007.
- 71 Sahlins 1981.
- 72 Henley 2002.
- 73 Reid 1988: 129–136; Wolters 1999: 164–165.
- 74 Hwang Chung 1537; Scott 1606, cited in Reid 1988: 121–126.
- 75 Binford 1972: 23–24.
- 76 Jacques 2009: 27; Skilling 2003: 103.
- 77 Murphy 2010: 48.

- 78 Brown 1996: 100–110; Revire 2014: 260. See Revire 2014: 263–265, tables 3 and 4, for lists of Pali citation inscriptions in Early Classic Thailand.
- 79 Jacques, *Ibid.*
- 80 Skilling 2003.
- 81 Brown 1996: 54.
- 82 Brown 1996: 143–144.
- 83 Revire 2014: 248, Map 1.
- 84 Skilling 2003: 106.
- 85 Brown 1996: 61.
- 86 Brown 1996.
- 87 Indorf 2014.
- 88 Bunker 2002.
- 89 Wicks 1992: 157.
- 90 Indrawooth 2009: 37.
- 91 Wicks 1992: 159.
- 92 Wicks 1992: 158 prefers to call them medallions. Skilling 2003 agrees with this opinion.
- 93 Wicks 1992: 174–175.
- 94 Gallon 2014: 332.
- 95 Moore and San Win 2014.
- 96 Lyons 1979: 355.
- 97 Indrawooth 2009: 36.
- 98 Skilling 2003.
- 99 Glover 2010; Loofs 1979.
- 100 Skilling 2003.
- 101 Borell 2008.
- 102 Clarke 2014.
- 103 Lavy and Clarke 2015.
- 104 Jumprun 2014; Kimura 2015: 3; Flecker, personal communication.
- 105 Gallon 2014.
- 106 Indrawooth 2009: 38.
- 107 Woodward 2003: 46–47.
- 108 Glover 1991: 352.
- 109 Clarke 2014: 326.
- 110 Murphy 2010, 2013a, b.
- 111 Paknam 1981: 57.
- 112 Michel 1988: Chapter 5.
- 113 Welch 1998.
- 114 Woodward 1975.
- 115 Lorillard 2014: 200–202.
- 116 McNeill 1997, comparing Phimai ware with that from the Malaeng Valley in central Thailand excavated by Mudar 1993.
- 117 Welch 1998: 226–227.
- 118 Smith 1979.
- 119 Higham 1998: 252.
- 120 Welch 1998: 224.
- 121 Welch and McNeill 1988–1989.
- 122 R.B. Smith 1979.
- 123 Higham 1998: 256.

- 124 Higham 1999.
- 125 Jacques 1989.
- 126 Parmentier 1927: 232.
- 127 Higham and Thosarat 1998: 200.
- 128 Talbot, Sarah and Chutima Janthed 2002.
- 129 Vickery 1998: 41.
- 130 Dumarçay and Royère 2001: xviii.
- 131 Vickery 1998: 19–21.
- 132 Vickery 1998: 23.
- 133 Wicks 1992: 191.
- 134 Vickery 1998: 36–37.
- 135 Coedès 1968: 57, 65–66. Vickery 1998: 38–39 thinks that Sresthapura was not Wat Phu, but somewhere near Angkor or Kampong Thom.
- 136 Coedès 1918.
- 137 Coedès 1956.
- 138 Santoni and Viengkeo Souksavatdy 1999.
- 139 Lorillard 2014: 189.
- 140 Lorillard 2014: 205.
- 141 Parmentier 1927.
- 142 Lorillard 2014: 210.
- 143 Lorillard 2014: 194–196.
- 144 Lorillard 2014: 199.
- 145 Tran et al. 2011: 2.
- 146 Lorillard 2014: 193.
- 147 Levy 1970. Woodward 2003: 133–135 also indicated the importance of Cham influence in the middle Mekong.
- 148 Pottier 2005.
- 149 Vickery 1998: 29.
- 150 Dumarçay et al. 2001.
- 151 Ibid.
- 152 Coedès 1968: 112.
- 153 Hudson 2004: 145.
- 154 Chao Tzang Yawngkhwe 1987: 63; Hudson 2004: 145; Moore 2007: 14.
- 155 Pe and Luce 1922: 35.
- 156 Aung-Thwin 1998: 195; Khyit San Win 2004: 11.
- 157 Khyit San Win 2004: *hsa*, 11.
- 158 Hla Thein Tun 1997: 27–28, Phone Tint Kyaw 2007: 44–45; see also Aung Thaw's work on Beikthano, U Po Lat's reference to Tagaung in 1962, and U Than Shwe's 1993 report on Tagaung referenced in Aung Myint 1998.
- 159 See Khyit San Win 2004; Khyit San Win 2005.
- 160 Moore 2007: 190.
- 161 Moore 2007: 190; Glover et al. 1996: 171, 173; Glover and Nguyen 2011; Yamagata 2011.
- 162 Chu Bien 2006.
- 163 Moore 2012; Moore and Win Maung 2006; Moore and Nyunt Han 2006; San Shwe 2006.
- 164 Nyunt Han et al. 2007.
- 165 Moore 2007: 188.
- 166 O'Connor 1975; Marschall 1968.
- 167 Strachan 1989: 38; Stadtner 2005: 140.
- 168 Moore 2007: 171.

- 169 Kala 1960.
- 170 Yi Sein 1979: 39.
- 171 Chihara 1996: 39.
- 172 Moore 2006; Moore 2007: 190; Glover et al. 1996: 171, 173; Glover and Nguyen 2011; Yamagata 2011.
- 173 Andaya 2008; Aung-Thwin 1998.
- 174 A local sequence refers to “a chronological series of components, phases, or sub-phases, within the geographical limits of a locality”; Willey and Phillips 1958: 23.
- 175 Willey and Phillips 1958: 37.
- 176 A “primarily spatial continuity represented by cultural traits and assemblages whose nature and mode of occurrence permit the assumption of a broad and rapid spread”; Willey and Phillips 1958: 33.
- 177 Moore 2007: 220.
- 178 Gutman and Hudson 2004: 163.
- 179 Moore 2007: 204.
- 180 Ibid.: p. 206.
- 181 Ibid.: p. 206.
- 182 Ibid.: p. 209.
- 183 Gutman and Hudson 2004: 163.
- 184 Ibid.: p. 163.
- 185 Idem.
- 186 Moore 2007: 148.
- 187 Gutman 2001b: 7–8.
- 188 Ibid.: pp. 33–34.
- 189 Ibid.: p. 36.
- 190 Nyunt Han 1984; Ko Ko 1989; Kyi Khin 2004.
- 191 Gutman and Hudson 2004: 161–162.
- 192 Gutman 2001b: 43.
- 193 Ibid.: p. 48.
- 194 Ibid.: p. 49.
- 195 Ibid.: pp. 51–52.
- 196 Gutman and Hudson 2004: 162.
- 197 Shwe Zan 1994: 53.
- 198 Sastri 1949: 71, quoting al-Mas’udi in a source dated 943 CE.
- 199 Tharapong Srisuchat 1996; Bronson 1996; Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 292, however, disagreed with the idea that transpeninsular routes were significant.
- 200 Christie 1998: 251.
- 201 Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 125.
- 202 Guy 1990: 7.
- 203 Lamb 1961, 1965; Khemachat 1983; Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 287–289; Ho 1991.
- 204 Bronson 1996.
- 205 O’Connor 1972: 60.
- 206 Khemachat 1984.
- 207 Guy 1990: 11.
- 208 M.C. Chand Chirayu Rajani 1974–1976. This argument was later summarized in the author’s book published in 1987. For a more recent statement, see Takashi Suzuki 2012.
- 209 Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 107–160.
- 210 Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2002: 150.
- 211 Bronson 1996.
- 212 Wheatley 1961: 252.

- 213 Wheatley 1961: 257.
- 214 Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002: 166–191.
- 215 Although Bosch 1941b thought it was not.
- 216 Boechari 2012a.
- 217 Sandhu 1973:14; Wheatley 1961: 26–36.
- 218 Wheatley 1961: 51–55; Wolters 1967: 200–205.
- 219 Abraham 1988: 19–28; Christie 1998; Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002: 272–273, 330–332.
- 220 Wolters 1967: 32, citing Sastri, JGIS 5/2, 1938, 128–130.
- 221 Sri Lanka; Majumdar 1986: Vol. I, 51, 69.
- 222 Wolters 1967: 46, 236; Wolters 1971: 196, footnote 10; Coedès 1918: 21.
- 223 Wolters 1967: 239.
- 224 Wolters 1967: 17.
- 225 Coedès 1968: 142.
- 226 Nik Hassan and Kamaruddin 1993: 78–80.
- 227 Allen 1988.
- 228 de Casparis 1956: 104.
- 229 Evans 1932; Sieveking 1956.
- 230 Bambang Budi Utomo 2007; Griffiths 2011; de Casparis 1956; and citations to older literature found therein.
- 231 de Casparis 1975: 66 also suggested that traditional scripts of South Sulawesi and the Philippines originated from Sumatra. These were written on perishable materials in recent times; they may have been in existence since the Early Classic period.
- 232 Damais 1992; L. Andaya 2008: 60; C. Gorman, personal communication 1976.
- 233 Condensed from the translation by J.G. de Casparis 1956.
- 234 Coedès 1992b: 46.
- 235 Monier-Williams 1979: 1215–1216.
- 236 Coedès 1930: 34, 59.
- 237 Woodward 2004: 329–354.
- 238 Sukarto Kartoatmojo 1986.
- 239 de Casparis 1991: 33.
- 240 Coedes 1992: 48–50.
- 241 Griffiths 2011. On Srivijaya Buddhism in general, see Skilling 2005.
- 242 Coedès 1968: 297, note 33.
- 243 Tibbetts 1979: 33, 43, 57.
- 244 Miksic 2012.
- 245 Kulke 1993.
- 246 Griffiths 2011.
- 247 *Xin Tangshu*; Wolters 1967: 231; Bielenstein 2005: 58.
- 248 Wang 1958: 79.
- 249 Bielenstein 2005: 59; Wang Gungwu 1958: 123.
- 250 *Mahāyānika Golayantritasri Gautama Sripada*; Majumdar 1986: II: 146 footnote 6. See Caldwell and Hazelwood 1994 for a different translation.
- 251 Skilling 2005.
- 252 Woodward 2004 is essential reading for those who wish to probe this subject more deeply.
- 253 Schopen 1989.
- 254 On the artistic connections between Indonesia and Nalanda, see Bernet Kempers 1933 and Huntington 1994.
- 255 Wheatley 1961: 210–251; Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002; Tibbetts 1971; Laffan 2005.
- 256 Laffan 2005: 29–31.
- 257 Bosch 1930: 155.



- 258 Miksic 1980.
- 259 Satyawati Suleiman 1980.
- 260 Manguin 1987, 1992, 1993a, 1993b; Eka A. Putrina Taim 1992; Ho and Bronson 1995. A book of translations of basic works on Srivijaya into English is available: *Kedatuan Sriwijaya* edited by P.-Y. Manguin et al. (second edition, 2014). Jakarta: EFEO, Pusat Arkeologi Nasional, Komunitas Bambu.
- 261 Wang 1958: 83.
- 262 Hirth and Rockhill 1911: 15; Sen 1996: 252.
- 263 Hirth and Rockhill 1911: 9.
- 264 Wang 1958: 97, quoting the *Tang shu*.
- 265 Wang 1958: 98–99.
- 266 Miller 1969: 186; Cortesao 1944: I, 122.
- 267 *Shibo shi*; Sen 1996: 256.
- 268 Wang 1958: 101.
- 269 Wang 1958: 90, note 1.
- 270 NBG 1888: 18–21; Roo de la Faille 1919: 330.
- 271 Van Sevenhoven 1825: 92.
- 272 Jaspan 1975: 8.
- 273 Dunn 1975: 100, Figure 7.1.
- 274 Hirth 1978: 37–38.
- 275 Miksic 1985: 437.
- 276 Manguin 2002: 78.
- 277 Kulke 1993: 172.
- 278 Wolters 1967: 225 and 342, note 163.
- 279 Bosch 1925; Dupont 1959; Schastok 1994.
- 280 Lavy 2015; Edwards McKinnon 2000.
- 281 *Oudheidkundig Verslag* for the first quarter of 1914: 150–153.
- 282 Wolters 1967: 174–176.
- 283 *Ibid.*: pp. 140–147.
- 284 Sukarto Kartoatmojo thought it was eighth century; cited in Nik Hassan Shuhaimi and Bambang Budi Utomo 1998: 29.
- 285 Krom 1931: 74–75.
- 286 O'Connor 1967.
- 287 Nik Hassan Shuhaimi and Bambang Budi Utomo 1998: 35.
- 288 Tan Yeok Seong 1949; Quaritch Wales 1949; Miksic 2011b: 57.
- 289 Dupont 1959.
- 290 Bougas 2007 reported gold ornaments supposedly unearthed in Goa, southwest Sulawesi, but these are Javanese in style and may have been imported. Their date of production is likely to be Middle or Late Classic.
- 291 Walaing is mentioned in several ninth-century inscriptions; de Casparis 1956: 244ff, 341–343; Damais 1964: 119ff.
- 292 Takakusu 1896: xlviii.
- 293 de Casparis 1975: 26.
- 294 Boechari 1966.
- 295 Boechari 1991–92; de Casparis 1950: 50–73, 1956: 207–211; Damais 1955: 133–136, 1968: 439; Stutterheim 1938; Bosch 1941a; Sukarto Kartoatmodjo 1985. The Laguna da Bai inscription from the Philippines, dated 900 CE, is also Old Malay, as is the Tanjung Tanah MS from Kerinci (fifteenth century; Kozok et al. 2015).
- 296 For recent summaries of the arguments, see Sundberg 2003; Woodward 2004.
- 297 de Casparis 1956; Boechari 2012b: 130.
- 298 On both these inscriptions and the general subject of central Javanese kings and dynasties, see Christie 2001.

- 299 Barrett Jones 1984.
- 300 Barrett Jones 1984: 91.
- 301 Pigeaud 1962: 289.
- 302 Wicks 267–268; Christie 1998b.
- 303 Sarkar 1972: II, 145–160.
- 304 Tim Jurusan Arkeologi 1991.
- 305 Wahyono 1994; Wahyono 1995; Dedah Rufaedah Sri Handari et al. 2007.
- 306 Soekatno 1982; Miksic 2011b.
- 307 Wilson and Flecker 2010; Flecker 2001a.
- 308 Wang 1958: 112.
- 309 KrahI et al. 2010: 40.
- 310 Flecker 2008.
- 311 Wolters 1983: 55.
- 312 Guy 2001–2002: 25; Hsieh 2010: 142.
- 313 Louis 2010: 91.
- 314 Dieng means “Deified Ancestors”.
- 315 Dumarçay 1986; Raffles 1978/1817; Krom 1923: 168, 204.
- 316 Dumarçay 1981.
- 317 Chihara 99–100; Dumarçay 2003: 74, 84, 91, 105; de Casparis 1958a.
- 318 Miksic and Slamet Pinardi 2015; Lombard 1969; Degroot 2006.
- 319 de Casparis 1961.
- 320 Sundberg 2003: 179, footnote 28.
- 321 Sundberg 2004: 111.
- 322 de Casparis 1950: 86 ff.
- 323 For example, Klokke 1995.
- 324 Miksic 1990.
- 325 Griffiths 2011b.
- 326 Hariani Santiko 1995.
- 327 For an exception, see Mundardjito et al. 2003.
- 328 Wolters 1967:198.
- 329 Tingley 2009: 180.
- 330 Glover and Yamagata 1998; Glover et al. 1996; Southworth 2004: 209; Stark 2006a: 413, 415; Glover and Yamagata 1994; Yamagata et al. 2001.
- 331 Yamagata et al. 2001.
- 332 Tingley 2009: 9.
- 333 Shiro Momoki 2011: 126.
- 334 Vickery 2009: 48.
- 335 Vickery 2009: 49.
- 336 Shiro Momoki 2011: 127.
- 337 Vickery 2009: 50.
- 338 Vickery 2009: 50; Maspero 1928: 122; Taylor 1983a: 280.
- 339 Schweyer 2011: 50–51.
- 340 Schweyer 2011: 52.
- 341 Schweyer 2011: 55.
- 342 Tran 2009: 155–156.
- 343 Schweyer 2011: 60.
- 344 Schweyer 2011: 60–62.
- 345 Tran 2009: 170.

- 346 Schweyer 2011: 62; Tran 2009: 170–171.
- 347 Schweyer 2011: 66–73.
- 348 Tran 2009: 177; Schweyer 2011: 68–70.
- 349 Chihara 1996: 187–188.
- 350 Schweyer 2011: 70.
- 351 Chihara 1996: 189.
- 352 Tran 2009: 178.
- 353 Chihara 1996: 191.
- 354 Schweyer 2011: 72.
- 355 Whitmore 2013: 2–3.
- 356 Taylor 2013: 38.
- 357 Taylor 2013: 38–39.
- 358 Nguyen-Long 2013: 14.
- 359 Taylor 2013: 38.
- 360 Taylor 2013: 40.
- 361 Nguyen-Long 2013: 12.
- 362 Nguyen-Long 2013: 11.
- 363 Schweyer 2011: 224–225.
- 364 Taylor 2013: 41–43.
- 365 Whitmore 2013: 2–3; Nguyen-Long 2013: 14; Taylor 2013: 43–45.
- 366 Taylor 2013: 45.
- 367 Taylor 2013: 46; Nguyen-Long 2013: 14.
- 368 Taylor 2013: 15.

# 6

## THE MIDDLE CLASSIC

900 to 1200 CE

The Tang dynasty fell in 906. This event had no direct impact on Seasia except for Vietnam, but numerous political changes took place in many parts of the region at almost the same time. Vietnam became independent after having formed part of China for 1,000 years. One major kingdom, Mataram, central Java, fell, as did the use of Sanskrit; only four Sanskrit inscriptions were written in Java in the Middle Classic, three of which are bilingual. Shipwrecks in the Java Sea indicate that maritime trade between China and Indonesia at the beginning of the Middle Classic was thriving. As in previous instances, the fall of kingdoms was not necessarily bad for business. In some cases it may have led to greater freedom for merchants.

Few archaeological remains from the Middle Classic period in Java have been identified. The tradition of building stone monuments had ended forever. In Sumatra, Srivijaya continued to prosper for another hundred years, but in the early eleventh century an invasion from India put an end to the charisma of the kingdom which had dominated the south end of the Straits of Melaka for 300 years. Chola trading guilds played a major role in culture and politics at the north end of the Straits of Melaka in the eleventh century, setting up inscriptions, imposing Saivite religion, and changing the direction of artistic development. As happens when a great tree falls in a forest, the disappearance of Srivijaya's shadow permitted numerous smaller kingdoms or mandalas in the Straits to spring to life.

A new settlement pattern began to emerge. Seaports with a high density of people and activities make their appearance in the archaeological record. This new type of city may have been connected with the formation of foreign enclaves. These new cities left few monuments or inscriptions, but they are known from ceramics, coins, metal slag, and other detritus of economic activity. New foreign trade regulations instituted by China favoured the growth of these independent ports.

In 910 the capital of the Cambodian mandala moved to Angkor. It moved to Koh Ker from 924 to 944, but then returned and remained at Angkor for 500 years. Angkor was unique: It developed centralized administration, territorially based identity, a stable capital, militaristic society, and a command

economy. Its power, culture, language, and art expanded into the Chao Phraya valley. This type of cultural expansion across mandala borders has been rare in Seasian history. The correlation between art styles and Angkor's rulers is unprecedented in Classic Seasia, as were Angkor's dynasties in a region which otherwise lacked strong lineages.

The kingdom of Bagan appeared. Bagan was similar to Angkor in many ways, including the implementation of a command economy and the lack of a monetary system, and the expenditure of vast resources on the construction of monuments, despite their locations in ecologically very different environments and the fact that Bagan chose Buddhism.

## URBANIZATION

The first written evidence of large, semi-permanent foreign communities in Seasia dates from the late eleventh century. An inscription of 1088 suggests that Indians were residing at Barus, northwest Sumatra. South Indian and Sri Lankan sculptures found at Kota Cina strongly suggest that south Indians or Sinhalese set up temples there. Like Europeans in later centuries, Indian, Arab, Persian, and Chinese merchants who took up long-term residence in the region clustered together for security, and built such fortifications as were allowed by local rulers. Usually these were temporary wooden stockades. The new residential pattern resulted in the deposition of dense piles of trash from imported objects and manufacturing activity in confined areas. The foreign communities may have become semi-permanent, but individual traders probably did not remain in them longer than a few years. This arrangement suited both the indigenous people and the foreigners. Foreigners managed internal security and justice, as they had done in ports of trade in China and India (and the rest of the Indian Ocean) since the Proto-classic period.<sup>1</sup> The earliest known archaeological sites which conform to the fully urban mode of life in Sumatra, where economic activities and population are condensed into a small area, formed during the Middle Classic. Similar sites existed in the Protoclassic but not in the Early Classic. It is likely that a three-tier hierarchy appeared by this time, but much work remains to be done before this hypothesis can be accepted.

Bronson and Wisseman<sup>2</sup> speculated that the Kota Cina site (North Sumatra) might have attained an urban stage as early as 1000, but archaeological research demonstrated that the site was not inhabited until the late eleventh century, and attained its greatest population (perhaps around 10,000) around 1200. Wheatley's observation that Sumatra "exhibited only incipient [urban] hierarchies" in the fourteenth century<sup>3</sup> can be challenged on the basis of archaeological data from several sites (Kota Cina, Barus, Palembang, and the lower Batanghari valley of Jambi). Wheatley's emphasis on hierarchies rather than individual settlements is, however, preferable to the idea that the category of city is universal and can be recognized in isolation rather than in the context of its region and period.<sup>4</sup>

The oldest site in Java which most people would unequivocally recognize as a city is Trowulan, where as many as 100,000 people may have lived in the mid-fourteenth century. If the "low-density city" of Angkor is included, this would add a total of 600,000 or 700,000 to the urban population of Seasia (in the sense of people living in the largest settlements of two- or three-tier settlement patterns)

during the Middle Classic. Seasian archaeologists have seldom focused on site boundaries or occupational areas. Few projects have used the sampling techniques necessary to compile accurate population estimates. The demography of Classic Seasia is still based on unexamined assumptions.

## ECONOMIC SYSTEMS OF THE MIDDLE CLASSIC PERIOD

Inscription K. 259 from early eighth-century Cambodia mentions a “chief of merchants”, possibly an individual who administered trade. Khmer inscriptions from the ninth century mention exchanges between individuals and in connection with temples but no references to markets, merchants, coins, or taxation. Raw silver and cloth were used as units to compare values, but barter was the main type of transaction. The Chinese envoy Zhou Daguan in 1296 observed that Angkor had no money. Angkor and Bagan instituted command economies in which the government regulated economic activity through taxation and redistribution. In insular Seasia, on the other hand, coinage became integral to the functioning of society.

Coins of silver, gold, and electrum stamped with a design resembling the flower of the sandalwood tree were used in Java in the Early Classic and in Sumatra and the Siam-Malay Peninsula in the Middle Classic. No coin production site has yet been found in Indonesia, though moulds for casting bronze coins in the shape of Chinese cash were used in Trowulan in the Late Classic period.<sup>5</sup> Most Indonesian coins were struck using dies, not cast. One candidate for the source of gold coins is Barus, northwest Sumatra, where the majority of one type has been found. A cache of 79 similar coins was found in Bengkulu, southwest Sumatra; Bengkulu is another candidate for a mint, since ancient gold mines have been discovered there. No ancient coins have been found in Palembang. Three gold specimens were discovered in consecration deposits of Candi Gumpung, Muara Jambi. Coins made from all three metals have been found at sites in the isthmian region of the Siam-Malay Peninsula. One example was found in a twelfth-century site in Fostat, Egypt. They have also been found on Seasian shipwrecks, and in the Philippines.

Buddhism in Seasia evolved quickly in the direction of greater esotericism during the Middle Classic. As a result, Buddhism cut itself off from the masses. Buddhist temples were very big and confined to centers of population and power. Brahmanical temples were much more widespread. Siva and associated deities including Ganesha were much more accessible to the general population. Visnu reappeared as a royal cult figure at Angkor Wat, but he does not seem to have been as popular among the mercantile class as he had been in the Protoclassic.

One of the most famous episodes in Seasian Buddhism was the residence of the Indian monk Atisa in Sumatra from 1012 until 1024. Atisa’s teacher, a Sumatran monk named Dharmakirti, wrote a text in “the city Srivijaya of Suvarnadvipa” which Atisa translated. Apparently they were both devotees of the goddess Tara. Ideas which Atisa may have taken with him when he moved to Tibet involve mandalas and mantras. Similarities between Borobudur reliefs of Buddha’s life and paintings in Tibetan monasteries may have been due to Atisa.<sup>6</sup> In Myanmar bodhisattvas were also worshipped, but Buddhism there does not seem to have developed into a mechanism for reinforcing social distinctions such as it became elsewhere in the region.



It is impossible to describe Angkor adequately in a few pages. The region of the capital between the Great Lake and the Kulen Plateau had many unique features, some of which can be explained by the ecological conditions of the area, but others must be due to either historical contingency or some other factor. The water management system of Angkor is a fascinating conundrum which has now been partially resolved, but to disentangle the phases of its development will need more research. The parameters of Angkor's transportation system have similarly been clarified, and ongoing research will necessitate further revisions of analysis of Angkor's Classic civilization. The same considerations apply to research on Angkor's population density and distribution.

The evolution of Cambodia's architecture and sculpture, by contrast, has been the subject of more than a century of research. These studies have revealed the existence of an unparalleled connection between individual rulers and art styles. Cambodia is the only Seasian country which resembles China in this respect. This is partly due to the custom of inscribing texts on the doorways of temples. The boundaries between art styles in Angkor are only approximate, not absolute.<sup>7</sup>

## CHINESE IMMIGRATION

There are no descriptions of overseas Chinese communities before the fourteenth century. By the early fifteenth century there were communities of several thousand in Java, Sumatra, and Ayutthaya. It is possible that such communities had already begun to form as early as the Middle Classic.<sup>8</sup> Yijing mentions that a Chinese monk who preceded him to Srivijaya left the monkhood, married a local woman, and remained there. During the Tang and Northern Song dynasties (up to 1126), it was a capital offence to go abroad without official permission. There are records of the apprehension of people caught violating this law. In 1150 a Chinese man and some "dark natives" came to official notice when their ship was wrecked on the coast of China. One of the "natives" was the Chinese man's wife.<sup>9</sup> Chinese formed partnerships with foreign merchants in China. In 992 a Javanese ambassador reported that a Chinese merchant had advised him on the procedures for bringing tribute.<sup>10</sup>

During the late Song dynasty the regulations were relaxed to allow Chinese to sail abroad. At first they were limited to brief stays overseas. No permanent communities of overseas Chinese were established until the Late Classic, but some settlements such as Kota Cina in northeast Sumatra may have had enclaves of Chinese who resided there for a few years before returning home. No Chinese ships of the Middle Classic have been found outside China. Probably most of the Chinese who went abroad during this period were passengers on Seasian ships.

## LATE SRIVIJAYA

Srivijaya was a major player in international relations until the Chola invasion of 1025. This attack no doubt came as a surprise to the people of the Straits. The Cholas must have chosen the proper time of year for sailing from the west. If they set out with the first breath of the new monsoon, no ship could

have gone in advance to warn Srivijaya of the approaching danger. The mechanics of this invasion, however, have never been explained. No formal navy existed anywhere in the world at this time. There is no evidence that the Chola rulers possessed a fleet. Probably south Indian merchant guilds provided the sea power necessary to carry out the raid. They may even have instigated it to improve their commercial prospects. The Tanjor inscription of 1030 gives the impression that the fleet went from port to port, defeating local garrisons, appropriating treasure, and taking the king prisoner.

It has been generally assumed that Srivijaya recovered quickly from the raid and resumed business as usual. Further consideration suggests otherwise. Wolters eventually concluded that Srivijaya no longer existed after the attack.<sup>11</sup> Archaeological remains of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries are much more plentiful in the Batanghari valley of Jambi than in Palembang. Other small ports such as Kota Cina appeared soon after 1030 and conducted business with both India and China. Kedah continued to exist, but underwent a major transformation. The center of activity moved from the Muda River to the Merbok estuary. The dominant religion represented by Candi Bukit Batu Pahat was Saivite. In southern Thailand and north Sumatra the vivid imprint of Tamil culture is found at many sites. The objective of the attack seems to have been to occupy the north end of the Straits. The south end seems to have been left to its own devices. The Chinese would not necessarily have noticed any major change.

The Middle Classic was also marked by the construction of the largest religious complex in Sumatra. Many brick temples dedicated to esoteric Buddhism were built in a broad plain in the hinterland at Padang Lawas. The Cholas mention a kingdom called Panai; this is the river which leads to this plain, which lies on the best route across the island of Sumatra. The Padang Lawas region may have been a major crossroads where routes leading north and south along the foothills of the Barisan Mountains met traffic flowing from the Straits of Melaka to the Indian Ocean. No port or urban community in the lower stretch of this river has yet been discovered, but this may change.

## EAST JAVA

After the sudden demise of Mataram in central Java, a new center of activity appeared in the area of modern Surabaya. Inscriptions continued to be carved, but only one or two temples are known from the Middle Classic. There is some evidence that the shift to east Java coincided with increased trade, but the disruption of some of the most salient characteristics of central Javanese culture suggest that the rupture was not voluntary or peaceful. There is no evidence that an attack from Srivijaya was involved, but Sumatra and Java reported separately to China that fierce hostilities between them were in progress in 992.<sup>12</sup> The fact that no mission was sent from Java to China until 992, after a gap in the relationship of more than 150 years, is evidence of a basic disruption of Javanese government.

## CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

The role of textiles in society and economy in the Classic period is very difficult to study. Seasians were preoccupied with clothing and textiles. Weaving was highly developed, and weavers probably enjoyed

high status. Implements for spinning thread and weights for looms have been found in archaeological sites in both the mainland and islands. Weaving is a metaphor for the creation of the world both in Seasia and in India. Textiles are sometimes mentioned in inscriptions, and a number of different types existed, but the names used for them are no longer known. No examples of cloth from this period have been preserved.

Special textiles were woven for display. In some areas cloth was used as a form of money. When Chinese envoys arrived in the Red Earth Land on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula in 607, they were given four lengths of white folded cloth to bathe with. Perhaps these were towels. Silk curtains were hung in women's quarters in palaces. The legend of Merah Silu, the founder of Pasai in north Sumatra, says that he could turn worms into gold and silver. Perhaps this is a reference to silk trade. Silk was made in fifteenth-century north Sumatra (mulberry trees grow wild in Sumatra), but Chinese silk was preferred. Some types of cotton were more valuable than silk.

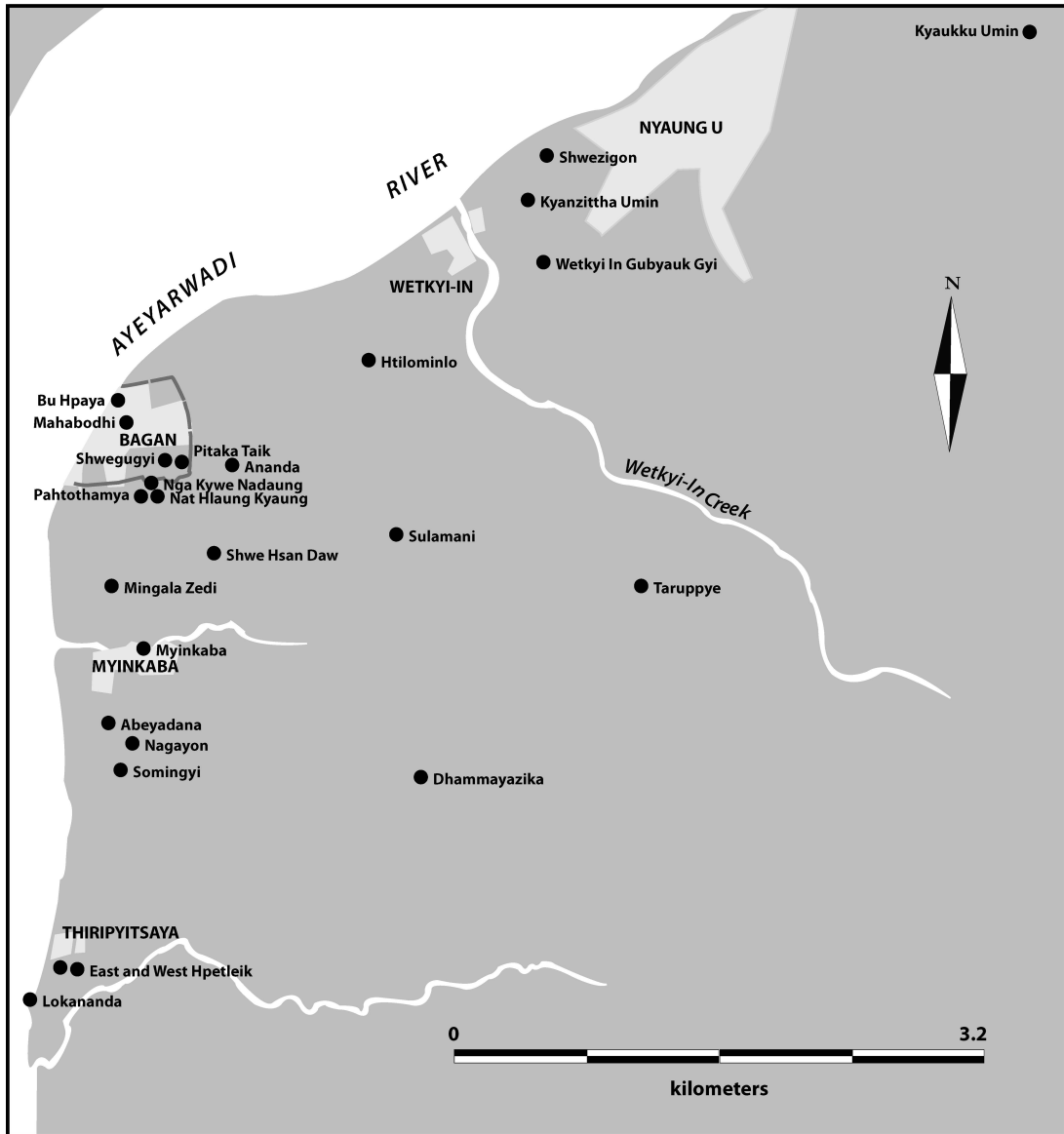
Seasian tribute to China included cloth; Jambi sent 13 pieces of cotton in 1082. Chinese merchants bought cotton in Vietnam, Luzon, and Java in the early thirteenth century. Cotton was grown in central Myanmar, east Java, Bali, Sumbawa, Buton (southeast Sulawesi), Siam, and Sumatra. Cloth was a major item of trade between different parts of Seasia. In the nineteenth century, Kedah had to pay tribute to Siam, including more than 80 pieces of special kinds of cloth. The merchant Wang Dayuan in the 1330s recorded the great diversity of cloth worn by people in various ports in the area of the Straits of Melaka. The *Malay Annals* describe a royal mission sent to south India in the fifteenth century to obtain 40 kinds of rare cloth. Cloth was a major medium of artistic expression, technical expertise, agricultural activity, and cultural exchange expenditure in Classic Seasia. Unfortunately, fibers are almost never preserved in archaeological sites, and since texts rarely directly discuss them, we are unlikely ever to know much about the cultural role of this material.

## BAGAN: BUDDHIST MANDALA

Scholars argue about how many golden ages there were in Myanmar history, but none dispute that the first golden age began at Bagan. Bagan rose to prominence in the eleventh century and became the center of a great mandala which lasted for approximately 450 years. The ruling elite of Bagan were Burmese speakers who, according to some scholars, came from the northeastern hills and settled in the upper Myanmar plains and irrigated regions of Kyaukse following Nanzhao attacks of the 830s and 840s.<sup>13</sup> An alternative view is that Burmese speakers were already living in the plains of Myanmar together with another population commonly referred to as "Pyu".<sup>14</sup> They suggest that the Burmans might have resided in 19 founding villagers, predecessors of Bagan (Figure 6.1).

There are few differences between early Burman and Pyu architecture, iconography, and even script.<sup>15</sup> Bagan might have been built on the site of a "Pyu" settlement.<sup>16</sup> Scholars have proposed that a stupa at Bagan, Nga Kywe Nadaung, might be a late Pyu structure, based on stylistic elements, but there is no evidence of Pyu objects within the Bagan archaeological zone, such as silver coins or burial urns (Figure 6.2).

According to chronicles and inscriptions, Bagan became a mandala center in the mid-tenth century under two kings, Sawrahan (circa 956–1001) and Kyaung Phyu Min (circa 1001–1021). This



**Figure 6.1** Map of Bagan

date is partially supported by a few radiocarbon dates derived from the testing of the site walls. They range from the second half of the tenth to the eleventh and through to fifteenth centuries.<sup>17</sup> Few Myanmar inscriptions can be confidently assigned to dates before the eleventh century. King Bodawhpaya (reigned 1782–1819) commissioned the collection of stone inscriptions and making of “true copies” of these stones. This exacerbates the problem of authenticating some inscriptions which might be recent copies rather than originals.



**Figure 6.2** Nga Kywe Nadaung

Historians continue to debate the proper use of chronicles. The earliest chronicle which contains extended accounts of Kings Sawrahan and Kyaung Phyu is U Kala's *Mahayazawingyi* (circa 1720), including the two kings' ascent to the throne, which hinge on fantastical interventions by gods such as Thagyamin (Sakka or Indra), a flying horse, and other semi-mythological beings. Sawrahan is described

as a cucumber farmer who killed the incumbent king and by default assumed kingship. The accounts are obviously not meant to be taken literally, but as allegories for righteous vs. amoral kingship. The texts provide an indication of a worldview, especially of the elite during the periods when the works were compiled, but they also preserve fragments of earlier perspectives and values. Chronicle traditions state that Bagan was founded in the mid-ninth century (circa 849) by King Pinbya, but this has not been confirmed by other evidence.

## THE BUDDHIST OECUMENE

Bagan's golden age began in the eleventh century when Bagan became a religious hub for monks and pilgrims. The "Buddhist oecumene" refers to a cultural and politico-religious regional network of the eleventh through fourteenth centuries<sup>18</sup> and constitutes a world within which exchanges and interactions flourished between three nodes which shared Buddhism. Religion was by no means the only linking principle: ideas, texts, and other items also bound it together, including commodities and persons, both pilgrims and merchants. The oecumene combined three mandalas: Bagan, northern Thailand, and Sri Lanka.

The concept of the Buddhist oecumene has been influenced by Wallerstein's world-system analysis,<sup>19</sup> which emerged in the 1950s. Wallerstein argues that the West's exploitation of peripheral regions began when Western Europe and later North America assumed the role of core region of the capitalist system aided by exploration followed by colonization. This system replaced a more loosely interlinked network. Wallerstein's model has been criticized because of its emphasis on Western Europe's dominance. Some critics advocate Asia-centric perspectives either by "reorienting" their studies from the point of view from China or examining earlier world-systems.<sup>20</sup> Other historians aver that the world-system began earlier, from 1,500 to 5,000 years ago.<sup>21</sup>

Even though economic exchange was conducted throughout the network which bound the centers of the Buddhist oecumene, historical sources emphasize the exchange of religious ideas, practices, persons, and texts. McNeill's examination of information networks in the Eurasian ecumenical world-system, Rapp's eleventh-century commonwealth of the Greater Caucasus connecting eastern Georgia and the Byzantine Empire, and Voll's Islamic religious world-system emphasize the importance of texts in the promotion of ideas of interconnected geo-temporal entities.<sup>22</sup> The Islamic world-system is characterized as a massive network of diverse peoples and groups connected by common beliefs and practices. Eighteenth-century writers such as 'Abd al-Ra'ūf played roles in re-establishing Islam as a unifying force in the Islamic world. The writers in Voll's Islamic world-system shared features with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Burmese writers who attempted to revitalize a unified Buddhist world which they thought had existed from the eleventh through fourteenth centuries. They depicted this Buddhist oecumene as a cultural and religious system led by a universal monarch (*cakravartin*), Anawrahta, a symbolic heir of the universal conqueror, Asoka, the indispensable absolute Buddhist monarch.

The choice of the eleventh century for the beginning of the Buddhist oecumene was premised on accounts of a king of Bagan, Anawrahta (reigned 1044–77). The Buddhist *oecumene* was manifested



in the literary environment of fifteenth- to nineteenth-century Myanmar, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. The description of interstate relations during Anawrahta's reign through the fourteenth century in Myanmar, northern Thailand, and Sri Lanka presented in these texts forms the basis for the conception of a Buddhist oecumene.

Anawrahta's exploits are recorded in Burmese chronicles of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, northern Thai chronicle(s) of the fifteenth century, and the Sri Lankan chronicle, *Cūlavamsa*, compiled in the thirteenth century and regularly updated until the nineteenth century. The chief source of works on Anawrahta and his Buddhist *oecumene* is a corpus of *yazawin* (chronicles). The trope of Anawrahta in these texts supports the argument that Bagan, northern Thailand, and Sri Lanka had close interactions with one another, beginning in the eleventh century.<sup>23</sup>

The Buddhist oecumene formed part of an even more extensive Buddhist network which extended to China and India. Merchants, monks, pilgrims, and other individuals travelled along the same network through which moved information, writing, Buddha's relics, and other Buddhist objects (e.g., votive tablets, amulets, bells, and *vajras*).

Adshead's Buddhist International examined the development of Buddhism as a world institution in an elaborate network of places such as monasteries, temples, and learning centers linked by trade routes. Adshead identified 400 CE as the start of the "Buddhist International".<sup>24</sup> Buddhism was transmitted via two land and two maritime routes;<sup>25</sup> the most relevant to the Buddhist oecumene were the southern and far southern routes. The southern sea route saw a great deal of shipping and trade and was utilized by Buddhist pilgrims going to India and Seasia.<sup>26</sup> With the decline of the Buddhist International, the Buddhist oecumene began with three centers located at Arimaddana, Bagan; Haripunjaya, northern Thailand; and Sri Lanka. This Buddhist oecumene between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries represented a subset of the entire Buddhist world-system, which encompassed both Mahayana and Theravada/Hinayana Buddhist centers.

The start of the fourteenth century marked the end of Bagan but not the end of the idea of the oecumene. Connections and exchanges likely continued between the three nodes perhaps in more intermittent ways as a period of fragmentation followed the demise of Bagan. An intense period of warfare began in the sixteenth century between Myanmar and Ayutthaya. Bayinnaung of Hanthawati-Taungngu (reigned 1551–81) was characterized as a *cakravartin* and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century chronicles drew parallels between Anawrahta and Bayinnaung. The oecumene was again resurrected in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when most surviving Myanmar texts were produced. Continuity rather than disruption marked the transition from the premodern to modern periods.

Burmese chronicles describe the extent of Anawrahta's kingdom by listing the countries sharing borders with Bagan. According to the *Mahayazawingyi*, Kala Pyi (India) marked the west, the north-west corner was the Kutungana water body, to the north was China, the northeast corner was Kadhanti Muslim country, to the east was Satissa-Pankar (Bengal?), and the southeast corner was Yawsa-Gywan country (Cambodia).<sup>27</sup> The emphasis on cardinal and ordinal points indicates that the oecumene was founded on mandala concepts. The texts do not provide any description of the capital of Bagan, its occupants, or their activities. For these, one has to use Chinese descriptions of Bagan.<sup>28</sup> Inscriptions provide an additional layer of information particularly on individual or types of donors, and peoples and services

dedicated to certain temple building projects and monasteries. However, they are a problematic data set which cannot be used as sources for reconstructing everyday life in Bagan.

## INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGES WITHIN THE OECUMENE

The movement of Buddha's relics throughout the Buddhist world describes one type of item which was exchanged. Texts formed another important commodity. Around the thirteenth century, authors in Sri Lanka began translating works such as the fifth-century *Mahavamsa*, tenth-century *Mahabodhivamsa*, and the twelfth-century works, *Dathavamsa* and *Thupavamsa*. They also compiled new *vamsa* in the vernacular language, Sihala. These Pali histories were then transmitted to other areas, such as Bagan and northern Thailand.

Works produced in Bagan and northern Thailand borrowed the historiographical content and format of the Pali works. An example is the sixteenth-century *Jinakalamalipakaranam*, which "borrows liberally from Sri Lankan works".<sup>29</sup> Burmese *yazawin* also relied heavily on the *Mahawin* (*Mahavamsa*) tradition of Sri Lanka, such as Shin Thilawuntha's *Yazawingyaw* ("Celebrated Chronicle", completed in the early sixteenth century). Two-thirds of this work was copied from the *Mahavamsa*. This tradition of adapting and copying texts strengthened the relations among the three centers of the Buddhist oecumene.

Following the eleventh century, regular contacts between Bagan and Sri Lanka also led to flourishing architectural, artistic, and literary traditions in Myanmar. Works of Pali exegetical literature began to multiply following the reunification of the Sinhalese *sangha* in 1164. Theravada orthodoxy became more popular on the Seasian mainland, but Mahayanism and Brahmanical practices remained prevalent. The *sangha* at Bagan, for example, was reformed.<sup>30</sup> The continuation and possible intensification of Buddhist textual and artistic exchanges supports the idea that a Buddhist oecumene was consolidating itself in the twelfth century. After the fourteenth century the Buddhist oecumene associated with Anawrahta declined.

Artifacts found in situ in Bagan, such as Chinese ceramics, confirm archaeologically that there were meaningful interactions between Bagan and China. Chinese *qingbai* blue and white, white, and green porcelain were recovered during preliminary surveys in Bagan between 2008 and 2010. The Chinese porcelain can be dated to the eleventh through fifteenth centuries; Ming blue and white porcelain represents the most recent examples of Chinese ware. The presence of Song (northern and southern) and Yuan white and green porcelain yields a range of eleventh through fourteenth centuries for sites in Bagan. Wang Dayuan's *Dao Yi Zhi Lue*, published in 1349, describes goods in three ports in Myanmar: Martaban, Wu Tie (Bago?), and Dawei (Tavoy). At Wu Tie, "*qingbai* blue and white porcelain" constituted one of the trade items.<sup>31</sup>

Chinese porcelain is an important aid for dating sites. Blue and white Yuan porcelain provides crucial information because it was produced between 1328 and 1352. The range of Chinese ceramics found in Bagan supports the general view that Bagan was integrated into a religious and communication network within which religion and commercial commodities travelled.

Bagan had cordial relations with the other two centers. During Anawrahta's reign, the Burmese king helped Vijayabāhu resist the Cholas.<sup>32</sup> Anawrahta also sent *bhikkus* to Sri Lanka.<sup>33</sup> The *Cūlavamśa*, *Pūjāvaliya*, *Rājāvaliya*, and *Nikāya-saṅgrava* contain detailed accounts of the two countries.<sup>34</sup> The Sinhalese monarchy requested help from Myanmar to save the ordination lineage from extinction three times: in 1065, 1475, and 1801.<sup>35</sup> Alexander Cunningham, a nineteenth-century archaeologist, found two Myanmar inscriptions in Bodhgaya, site of the Mahabodhi temple in north India: a short inscription on a copper gilt umbrella and a long one on stone. Both recorded Burmese missions which came to repair the Mahabodhi. One describes a mission sent by Kyanzittha (1084–1113).<sup>36</sup>

Information regarding Bagan's relations with northern Thailand derives largely from chronicle traditions connected with Haripunjaya, Chiang Mai, and Lan Na. These texts, the *Mulasasana*, *Cāmadevī vamśa*, and *Jinakalamalipakaranam*, were composed during Lan Na's golden age in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>37</sup> Scholars have argued that the northern Thai Buddhist tradition owed much to both Sri Lanka and Myanmar.<sup>38</sup> The positive portrayal of Bagan's eleventh-century king in the northern Thai texts and northern Thai Buddhist tradition's emphasis on connections with Sri Lanka and Myanmar reflect the interconnectedness of the three centers. Another scholar argues that "the source of the establishment of the Buddha, Maha and Cula Sakkaraja eras in the Padaeng Chronicle and in the four northern Thai chronicles" came from Burmese chronicles.<sup>39</sup>

Intercultural exchanges between Bagan and northern Thailand are also observed in the artistic elements shared between Lamphun/Chiang Mai and Bagan-Myanmar. Some of these traits were appropriated by thirteenth-century Sukhothai art. Sukhothai's relations with northern Bagan had a significant impact on the political policies of thirteenth-century Sukhothai's king Ramkhamhaeng. His social welfare policies reflected the influence of "ancient Tai political traditions and adapted the utopian Buddhist visions of King Kyanzittha".<sup>40</sup>

Bagan had a direct influence on northern Thai art, especially Lamphun or Haripunjaya. Twelfth- and thirteenth-century Lamphun's Buddhist sculptures reflected Dvaravati, Bagan, and Khmer influences.<sup>41</sup> These similarities are observable in the votive tablets from Bagan and northern Thailand, and the iconography of Avalokitesvara or Lokanatha. For instance, a hand-modelled Buddha in Chedi Ku Kut "recalls the folksy vigor of terracottas at Pagan's Hpoteik pagodas".<sup>42</sup>

## BAGAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Bagan architecture possesses unique features, but its sculpture is conventional and standardized. Bagan is built of brick except for Nan Hpaya, which is made of sandstone. Religious structures in Bagan come in two main types: stupas (with a solid core; usually referred to as *zedi*) and temples, divided into two categories: *gu* ("cave", usually single-story and resembling a grotto) and *pahto* (which can be multi-storied and possess complex ground plans). There are more temples than stupas. The pinnacles of most Bagan temples are either shaped like stupa or *sikhara* (four-sided pyramids with curving edges), sometimes surmounted by a metal *hti* (*chatra*, or umbrella, in Burmese). The *sikhara* which is found at the Mahabodhi temple on the spot in India where Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment

might have become popular in Bagan in the twelfth century after Kyanzittha's mission to repair the Bodhgaya temple.<sup>43</sup>

Bagan architecture can be divided into four periods, each reflecting specific ethnolinguistic groups. The first period consists of buildings constructed between the first and mid-eleventh centuries, ending in 1057 when *yazawin* claim that Anawrahta captured Thaton. The style of this phase purportedly is derived from Pyu architecture; examples include Bu Hpaya and Nat-hlaung Kyaung, which utilizes the true arch and vault. The second phase coincided with Anawrahta's conquest of Thaton and the reign of his son Sawlu (1057–84). This period is believed to coincide with the use of Mon architectural features in Lokananda, Shwesandaw, East and West Hpetleiks, and Shwezigon. The idea of Mon influence derives from the ideas of G.H. Luce and his student Ba Shin, who associated Mon architecture with dark and mysterious interiors. Buildings of this period typically have one story (Figure 6.3).

Luce and Ba Shin also influenced the designation of critical features of the next period: the reign of Kyanzittha (1084–1112), associated with the Abeyadana and Ananda temples, great accomplishments in mural painting and architectural complexity. The flame-shaped motif which adorns the tops of doorways has been characterized as Mon.<sup>44</sup>

The fourth period began with Kyanzittha's death and lasted until Bagan's demise in the fourteenth century. Traditional art historians typify this phase as transitional to Myanmar- and Sinhalese-style architecture. Examples include Sulamani and Dhammayazika, built in 1196, one of 17 pentagonal



**Figure 6.3** Shwezigon, Bagan

temples in Bagan. Why did five-sided structures begin to be built in the late twelfth century? They may be connected with Myanmar belief in the existence of four Buddhas who existed before the present age. A more eclectic mix of architectural styles emerged in the late twelfth through fourteenth centuries; the factors which led to such diversity remain to be explored.

Exteriors of Bagan temples are decorated with stucco and plaster depicting motifs from animal figures to geometric patterns and deities. Certain temple and stupa exteriors are decorated with glazed plaques, some bearing designs. At Dhammayazika and Shwezigon, glazed plaques depict stories derived from the Jatakas and are inscribed. Somingyi, a stupa, has glazed flat plaques with incised decorations as well as moulded architectural features such as *kala* heads.

Approximately 450 to 500 temples in Bagan contain surviving painted murals. Eleventh-century structures feature geometric and repetitive motifs such as hundreds of Buddhas and floral and plant motifs as well as ornamental bands. The early murals are purely decorative and iconic, focusing on the Buddha. In twelfth- and thirteenth-century temples, the murals contain more narrative and textual contents. Pahtothamya includes glosses following strictly textual descriptions. The contents comprise Jatakas, key episodes in Gautama Buddha's life, and other imagery, such as the 28 Buddhas.<sup>45</sup>

## BAGAN AS AN URBAN CENTER

Whether Bagan was a city has not been widely discussed.<sup>46</sup> The orthogenetic city is characterized by the dispersal of manufacturing activities around the periphery which specialize in one specific product. There, density of permanent population is low and comprises nobles, civil, religious and military bureaucrats, and their staff. Heterogenetic cities, on the other hand, produce few monuments, are usually found on the borders of ecological zones rather than at their centers, used money, produced many types of commodities in the core area of settlement, and had dense populations.<sup>47</sup>

Bagan was neither purely orthogenetic or heterogenetic, but possessed features of both models of urban centers. It was probably much closer to the orthogenetic end of the spectrum. But this assertion will remain unverified until research is undertaken to identify habitation sites in Bagan and their characteristics.

As in contemporary Angkor, Bagan inscriptions indicate the complexity of socioeconomic groups in the Middle Classic capital in the form of long lists of land, people, goods, and other things donated to temples and monasteries. In an inscription of 1190, people donated to a monastery included side drummers, trumpeters, players of a violin-like instrument, dulcimer players, singers, and dancers. In another instance, in 1242, a female donated sculptors, painters, masons, cowherds, goldsmiths, gardeners, and launderers. Another gave palanquin bearers, umbrella bearers, launderers, and weavers. Other occupations included barbers, cooks and servers of betel, woodcarvers, carpenters, painters, blacksmiths, image-makers, jug-makers and tray-makers, etc.<sup>48</sup> The degree of occupational specialization suggests that Bagan society was diversified and complex, and possibly might have had a dense population. But caution must be exercised here: unlike Angkor, the Bagan inscriptions do not give statistical information about the numbers of people involved. A large proportion of occupations were related to monument



building and activities associated with Buddhism and the monastic order as well as with the royal palace. This points to an orthogenetic and redistributive economy, with elite control of craft production. Archaeology in Bagan has largely focused on the excavations of buildings; other types of research, such as a study of ceramic distribution, are needed to refine the characterization of ancient Bagan's economy.

## THE DEMISE OF BAGAN

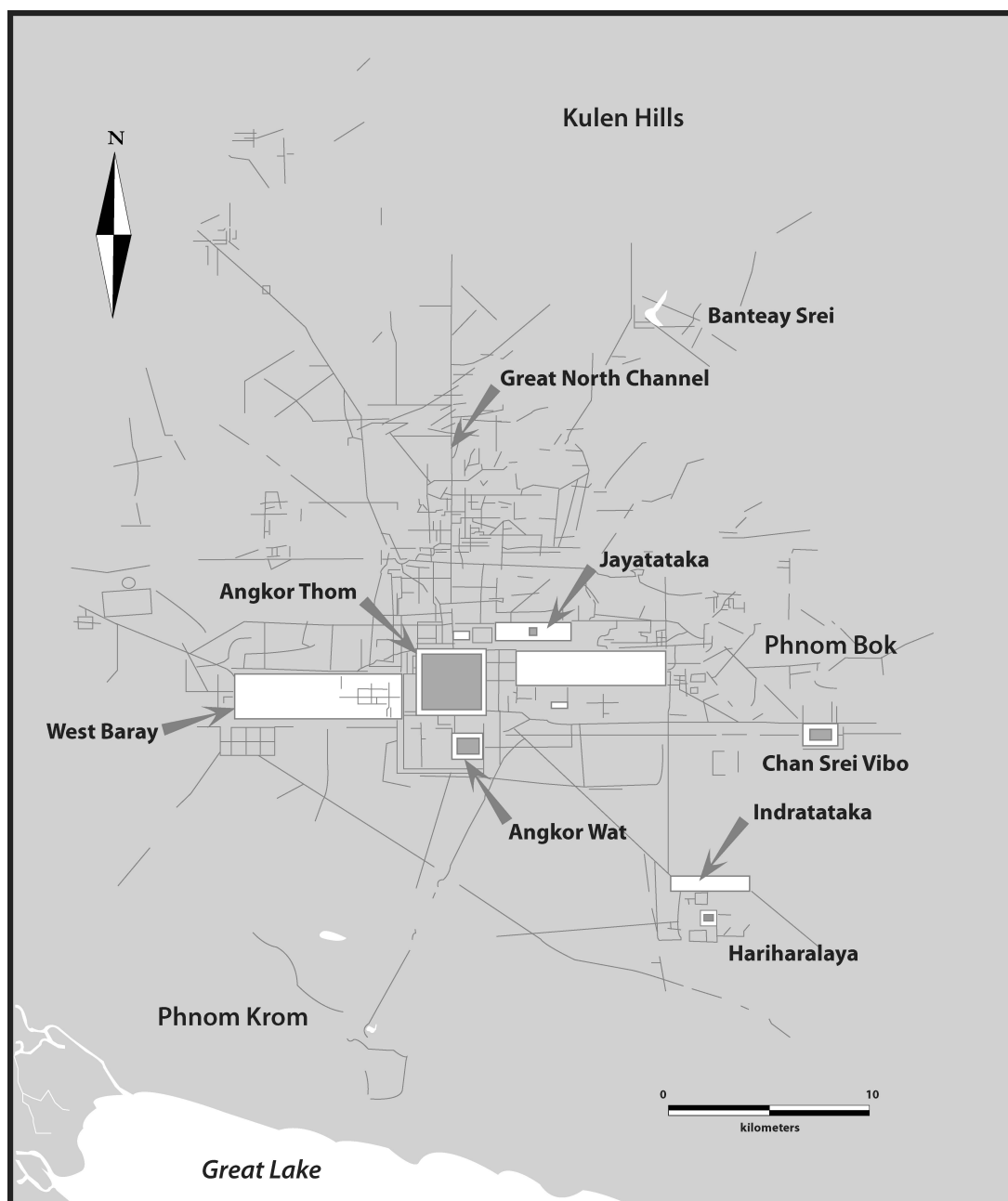
Bagan declined soon after the Mongol invasions between 1277 and 1301. Chronicles claim that an incumbent king fled from Bagan, which won him the epithet Taruppye ("he who fled from the Chinese"<sup>49</sup>). Whether the Mongol invasion reached Bagan is debated, but the invasion was probably the catalyst for Bagan's demise. The factors which made the kingdom vulnerable to collapse were likely institutional and structural. Probably the interdependent and yet competitive relationship between the kingship and the *sangha* was the Achilles' heel of Bagan; eventually the amount of resources tied up in non-productive religious consumption broke the camel's back during the reigns of weak kings, and led to the fall of the polity.<sup>50</sup> Internal fragmentation and instability were correlated with revolts at Martaban, invasions by Shan chiefs, the development of an independent kingdom in lower Myanmar, and climatic factors, such as droughts and food shortages.<sup>51</sup>

## THE TRIUMPH OF ANGKOR

Angkor's core area, including temples, field systems, water management features, and artifact scatters, covers nearly 4,000 square kilometers.<sup>52</sup> The core area is built on a bed of sediments 80 meters thick, the top 16 meters of which have been deposited during the Holocene. The southern part of the core area from Phnom Krom to the Great Lake (Tonle Sap), which is subject to annual flooding, exhibits very few remains. The rate of sedimentation in the lake is surprisingly low (1 mm per year). The lake's borders have probably not changed much in historic times (Figure 6.4).<sup>53</sup>

King Yasovarman inherited the throne in 889 and built his capital, which he named Yasodharapura, 20 kilometers west of Roluos. Angkor (the modern name of the site, which is the Khmer pronunciation of *nagara*, "capital" or "palace") was not a wilderness; the area had been settled more than 1,000 years earlier. The Angkor Empire was unique in Southeast Asian history in that its center remained in one place for more than 500 years, except for a period in the tenth century when the usurper Jayavarman IV moved it to Koh Ker. Few remains of the early phases of the capital exist; later structures were built over them. Inscriptions found at Ak Yom, partly buried when the West Baray was built, date from 600, 674, 704, and 1001. Ak Yom has several unusual features, including a central shaft 12 meters deep; scholars think that it was either meant for offerings or to measure the depth of water in the baray. Another temple at Prei Kmeng, west of the baray, has given its name to an art style popular during the period 635 to 700. A tower was built at the place now called Phimeanakas (Figure 6.5) before Angkor became the capital.





**Figure 6.4** Angkor region and hydraulic system



**Figure 6.5** Phimeanakas

The Sdok Kak Thom inscription records that Yasovarman moved the *devaraja* and erected a sacred *lingga*, proving that the *lingga* and the *devaraja* were two separate objects. The cult of mountains was a major factor in planning the royal capital. Yasovarman built temples on three hills which form a straight line. His new capital was built around the middle hill, Phnom Bakheng. He also built temples on Phnom Krom about 15 kilometers to the southwest, and Phnom Bok, a similar distance to the northeast. The largest *lingga* ever found in Cambodia was discovered on Phnom Bok.

Like Khmer chiefs of the pre-Angkor period and his own father, Yasovarman built a new reservoir, now called the eastern baray. The corners were marked by Sanskrit inscriptions in Nagari script similar to that used in Java 100 years earlier. Along the southern bank he built religious compounds, including one for three groups of devotees of Siva, one for three groups of Vaisnavites, and one for Buddhists. Other projects included a Siva temple at Preah Vihear.

Because the kingdom commanded a large bureaucracy, it has been assumed that Angkor was a city with a substantial population. This theory has not been proven. The site probably had purely administrative functions, with inhabitants who were mainly bureaucrats, priests, and their servants. Zhao Rugua, who wrote in 1225, mentioned no city, only one stone building which belonged to the king; others, commoners and nobles alike, lived in houses of thatch and bamboo.

## THE KHMER KING AND THE NAGA QUEEN

Phimeanakas may have been built to pay homage to a Preclassic deity: a *naga* (divine serpent) queen. The structure visible today may have been built soon after the return from Koh Ker in 944. It is located at the junction of roads leading to the eastern baray and Phnom Bakheng, a highly significant position in the cosmologically symbolic plan of the capital. It was remodeled by later kings. The Chinese envoy Zhou Daguan called it the “tower of gold”, a celestial palace, and said the king had to sleep there every night with the naga queen. The trope of a naga queen who confers legitimacy on a ruler from a foreign land is also found in the story of the origins of the Malay rulers, and in the legend of Nyai Lara Kidul and Senapati in Java. In Myanmar, early kings claimed descent from Mahasammata of the Solar Dynasty on the male side, and from *nagini* on the female side. In legends and art, nagas were associated with the elixir of immortality (*amerta*): in the *Garudeya*, Garuda’s mother became the slave of the nagas and could only be ransomed with *amerta*. East Javanese temple reliefs depict this legend. In Angkor, water and nagas is one of the basic themes of sculptures such as temple railings.

### Harsavarman I (Harsavarman, Harshavarman)

Harsavarman (Harsavarman, Harshavarman) became Angkor’s second king around 900 and died in approximately 922. He built two important monuments: Baksei Chamkrong, at the north foot of Phnom Bakheng, and Prasat Kravanh (Cardamom Temple). Baksei Chamkrong (“the bird that watches over the capital”) at the foot of Phnom Bakheng was the first Khmer building to employ advanced perspective effects. The lintels are inscribed with a list of Khmer kings up to 947.

An inscription dated 921 on the entrance to Prasat Kravanh mentions a Visnu statue; images connected with Visnu appear on the walls, but archaeologists found a Siva lingga in the central tower. The site consists of five towers in a row. Other temples of this type include Preah Ko and Lolei, all seemingly meant for statues of ancestors in the form of gods: male in the east, female in the west. Prasat Kravanh is different because the towers are aligned from north to south.

### JAYAVARMAN IV AND THE MOVE TO KOH KER

Isanavarman II, younger brother of Harsavarman I, became king in 922 and died around 928. In 921 one of his maternal uncles rebelled and set up an alternative capital at Koh Ker (Chok Gargyar), taking the *devaraja* with him and giving himself the reign name Jayavarman IV (Figures 6.6 and 6.7). Why did he move to Koh Ker? In addition to the desire to usurp control of the kingdom,<sup>54</sup> other factors may have been involved. Koh Ker was closer to iron supplies coming from the east.<sup>55</sup> Koh Ker may have been Jayavarman IV’s birthplace; a three-sided baray already existed there.<sup>56</sup> Numerous shrines imply that the site was densely populated, at least briefly. Jayavarman IV’s inscriptions encouraged his subjects to

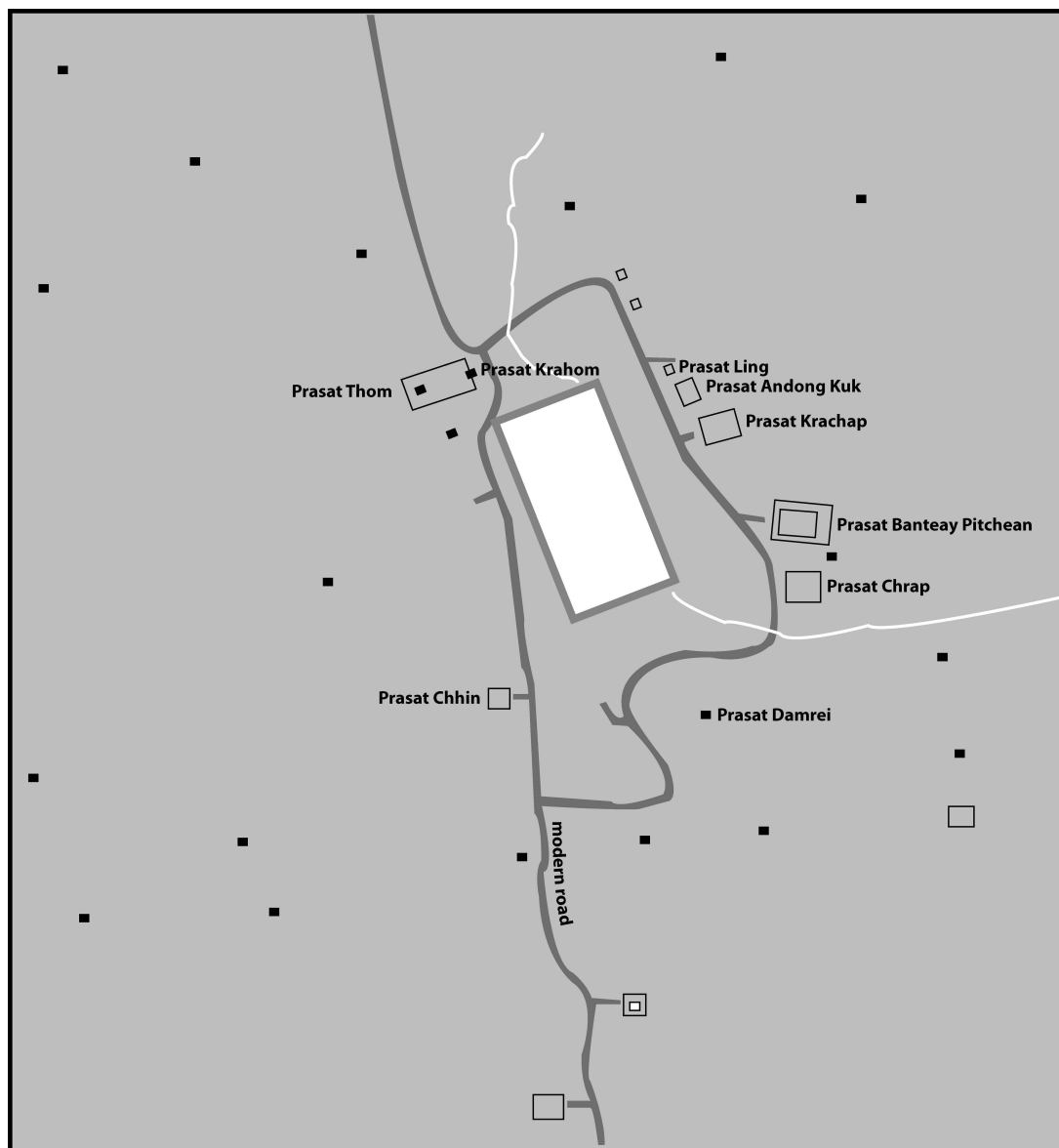


**Figure 6.6** Prasat Thom, Koh Ker

consider him as a deity rather than a human. This may be the earliest instance of a Southeast Asian ruler claiming to be a god rather than divinely inspired. The practice may have been related to an autochthonous belief in the reunification of souls of the dead with a larger entity, a Great Ancestor Spirit, which existed in most parts of Southeast Asia.

He may have appealed to a right of succession by charisma rather than by birth. This right was known in India and Java, but was less common in Cambodia. Kings who appealed to this justification claimed to have been appointed by a national divinity. Jayavarman IV did not follow standard practice by combining his name with that of an epithet for Siva; he named it *Tribhuvanesvara*, “Lord of the Three Worlds”, signifying a claim that he had been directly appointed by Siva.

Jayavarman IV died in 941 and was succeeded by his son Harsavarman II, who died around 944. His cousin Rajendravarman moved back to Yasodharapura (Angkor). An inscription at the temple of Bat Chum glorifies him for rescuing the sacred city from the wilderness which had engulfed it, comparing him to Kusha (son of Rama who restored the city of Ayodhya), and describing a palace with a golden sanctuary comparable to that on the mountain of the gods. In 952 he erected the East Mebon, or artificial island, in the middle of the east *baray* built by his uncle Yasovarman. He died in 968, and was succeeded by his son Jayavarman V. Many structures were built during his reign, some under his sponsorship, others with donations from his officials. The most famous of these is Banteay Srei, built in 967.



**Figure 6.7** Map of Koh Ker

Banteay Srei has been called the most beautiful building erected in Classic Southeast Asia. It was sponsored by a “holy teacher” named Yajnavaraha. Apparently he was not wealthy enough to build a big temple, so it is small, but contains all the components of a large temple in miniature. Because of this and the pinkish color of the sandstone used, the shrine has a gem-like quality. Carvings on its lintels are the first in Cambodia to depict Hindu legends.



## THE END OF THE JAYAVARMAN II DYNASTY AND THE RISE OF THE DYNASTY OF THE SUN

Jayavarman V, son of Rajendravarman, took the throne as a boy in 968. He devoted many resources to building a palace which has not been identified. His sister married a Brahmin born on the banks of the Yamuna River in India, who built Preah Einkosei in Siem Reap and other temples. He died in 1001 and was succeeded by his nephew Udayadityavarman I. He left two inscriptions at Koh Ker and Mlu Prei, but was overthrown by Suryavarman I and disappeared.

Suryavarman I (Surya is the sun god in Hinduism) claimed that his reign began in 1002, but another claimant to the throne, Jayaviravarman, ruled Angkor between 1003 and 1006. Suryavarman overthrew him after a civil war around 1010. Suryavarman I was not a descendant of Jayavarman II, and thus his reign signalled the appearance of a new line of rulers in Angkor.

Like other Khmer usurpers, he claimed his legitimacy through his mother's and his wife's relations. Although he continued to maintain the *devaraja* ceremony, he also sponsored many Buddhist foundations. His posthumous name, *Nirvanapada*, suggests that he was a Buddhist, but he was quite war-like.

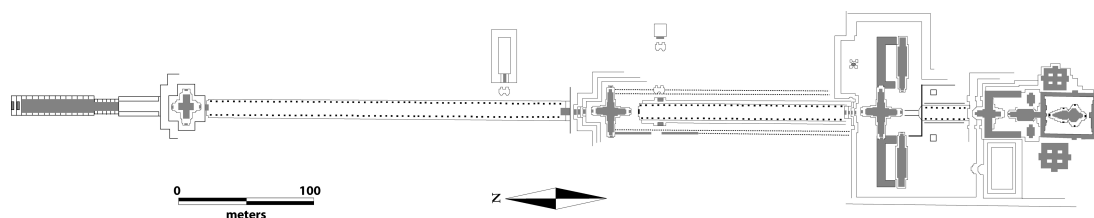
Suryavarman I followed a Srivijayan practice by carving an oath of loyalty at the entrance to the palace which officials had to take. During his reign the Phimeanakas temple was apparently remodelled for the last time. He set up four linggas called Suryavarmesvara at the four corners of his kingdom: at Phnom Chisor in the Mekong Delta, Battambang in the west, Preah Vihear on the Dangrek mountains to the north, and a place in the northeast not yet identified, probably on the Mekong.<sup>57</sup> In 1012 he donated a chariot to Rajendra Chola I of south India, possibly to cement an alliance against Srivijaya.<sup>58</sup> In 1025 the Chola Empire overthrew Srivijaya. Later chronicles of Chiangmai describe wars between Haripunjaya, Lopburi, and Kambojaraja ("king of the Kambujas"), whom Coedès identified with Suryavarman I. There are several eleventh-century Khmer inscriptions in Lopburi, at least one of which was set up by Suryavarman I.<sup>59</sup>

Preah Vihear stands on the edge of a cliff in the Dangrek mountain range along the border between Cambodia and Thailand. Yasovarman I inaugurated a Siva sanctuary in this complex in 813 CE. Construction continued over a few centuries, resulting in a hybrid style reflecting influences ranging from Koh Ker of the mid-tenth century to Khleang of Jayavarman V. In the eleventh century, Suryavarman I carried out extensive remodelling. Most of the structures visible there today date from his reign. In the twelfth century, Suryavarman II and his priest Divakarapandita carried out some alterations (Figure 6.8).

Suryavarman I died in 1049 and was succeeded by his son Udayadityavarman II. Two years later the Sdok Kak Thom inscription was carved, signifying a major change in the fortunes of the family who had supervised the *devaraja* for precisely 250 years. The chief priest married a sister of the queen, obtained a new title, and a new job as royal spiritual teacher. Far from being a demotion, the former priest was very happy that someone else would now have the job of looking after what was probably a small portable statue brought out only on certain occasions.

Udayadityavarman II sponsored major construction at Angkor, including the Baphuon, which was the centrepiece of his capital. His projects obliterated most traces of the older layout of the site. The Baphuon is one of the major monuments of Angkor. This was the last Saivaite terraced temple built in Angkor. The Chinese envoy Zhou Daguan was greatly impressed by it. The carving style of the





**Figure 6.8** Plan of Preah Vihear

monument influenced other Khmer monuments, leading to the term “Baphuon style” to refer to them. In 1066 he died and was succeeded by his younger brother, Harsavarman III.

Cham inscriptions from My Son claim that they defeated Harsavarman III in battle and devastated Sambor in northeast Cambodia. He survived, however, until 1080. There followed a succession dispute. Details of the next few decades are unclear. Nripatindravarman may have ruled at Angkor until around 1113, but King Jayavarman VI is also mentioned in later inscriptions by the two greatest kings of Angkor, Suryavarman II and Jayavarman VII.

## THE MAHIDHARAPURA DYNASTY

Inscriptions by later kings say that Jayavarman VI came from a place called Mahidharapura, probably in the Mun valley north of the Dangrek Range. Inscriptions of this family are found at Phimai, Phnom Rung, and Phnom Wan. Roads leading there from Angkor were built at this time.<sup>60</sup> He died in 1107 and was succeeded by Dharanindravarman I, who ruled from 1107 to 1112. His grandnephew, Suryavarman II, claimed to have slain him by jumping onto his elephant during a battle. Suryavarman II then became king in 1113.

Suryavarman II came to power in an unsettled time. He claimed to have defeated two relatives who had carved up Angkor after the death of Jayavarman VI. One was Dharanindravarman I; the name of the other is not recorded. Soon after his coronation in 1113, he began a campaign of military expansion. His first target was Champa, possibly motivated by a desire to obtain better access to maritime trade. When Dai Viet allowed fleeing Cham to take refuge in its territory, he invaded Dai Viet. In 1131 he forced Champa to contribute soldiers to his campaign against Dai Viet, but they were defeated. The Cham under Jaya Indravarman III preferred to pay tribute to Dai Viet, so in 1145 Suryavarman II captured the Cham capital; Jaya Indravarman III disappeared. Further invasions, however, failed and in 1149 the Cham established a capital at Vijaya.

The Khmer invaded Dai Viet again in 1150 but again were defeated. Thus Suryavarman’s attempt at eastward expansion was ultimately futile. Later Thai chronicles describe Khmer battles against Haripunjaya as failures, but Chinese sources of the mid-twelfth century describe Cambodia as extending from Champa to Bagan in Burma and Grahi in what is now peninsular Thailand. The Chinese accorded great respect to the Khmer ruler. However, Chinese knowledge of Cambodia may well have come from Khmer embassies, a biased source.

Suryavarman II resumed the practice of sending diplomatic missions to China, after a suspension during several previous reigns. He sent missions in 1116 and 1120. Chinese sources mention trade with Cambodia between 1131 and 1147.<sup>61</sup>

Suryavarman II is best known for his construction of Angkor Wat. It has been written that Angkor Wat was his funerary temple. As noted earlier, this is a misconception based on a faulty understanding of the nature of early Southeast Asian concepts regarding ancestor souls.

Curiously for such an important ruler, the date of Suryavarman II's death is unknown. His last inscription is dated 1145. Rulers of the period 1050 to 1167 left few inscriptions compared with earlier kings. This may be evidence of more centralized political power, since minor officials, the source of many earlier inscriptions, were mostly silent in this era.

## ANGKOR WAT

*Nagaravatta*, the original name of Angkor Wat, utilized several innovations not found in previous structures at Angkor. The monument was probably inspired by Phimai, where Suryavarman II's Mahidharapura dynasty originated. Angkor Wat's builders employed new perspective effects.<sup>62</sup> The temple's location and layout were coordinated with pre-existing structures. The modern north-south road in front of Angkor Wat's main entrance already existed when the temple was planned.

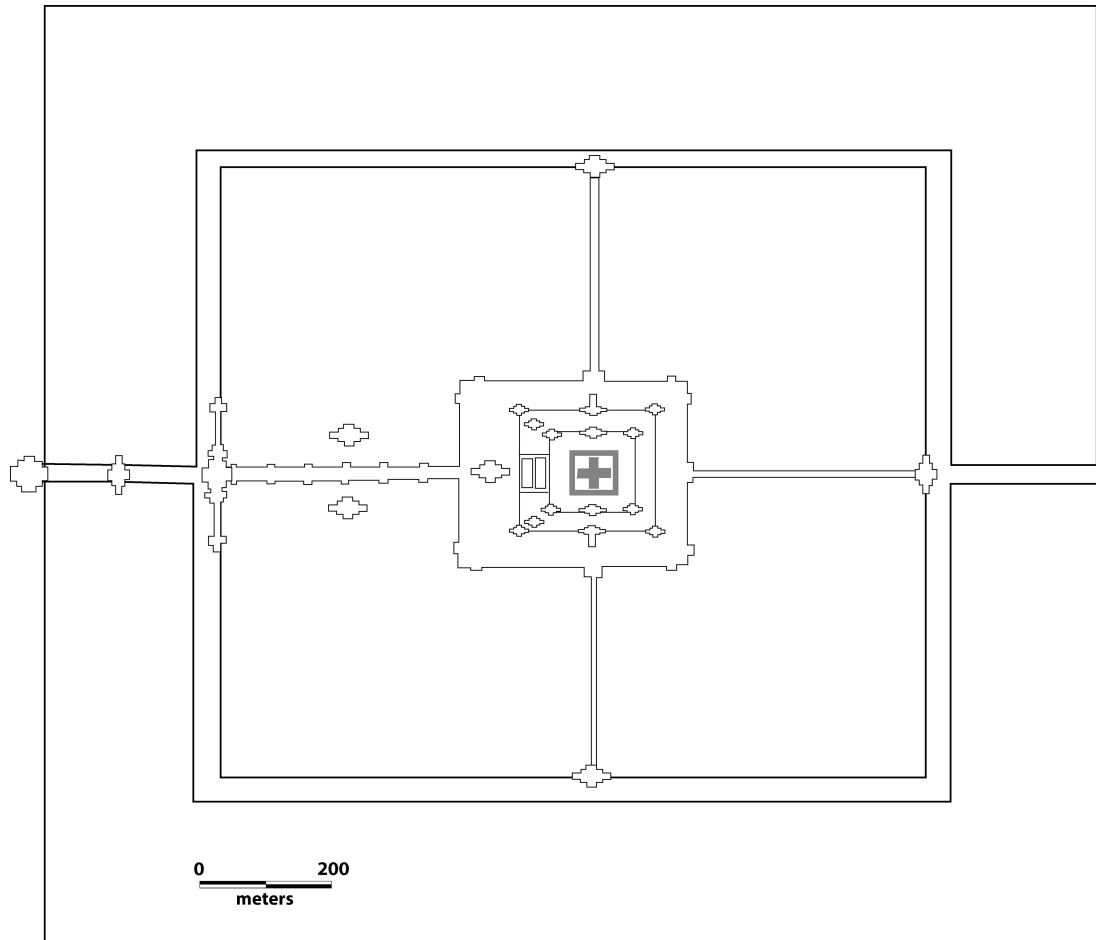
Angkor Wat was built over a period of 28 years (1122–1150). Some carvings were finished in the sixteenth century, when the capital moved back to Angkor for a few decades, in a greatly inferior style. Like several earlier Khmer temples, Angkor Wat is surrounded by a moat. Its excavation alone would have required 5,000 men working for 10 years. Suryavarman II built no other major temples; it seems likely that most of the kingdom's resources were devoted to this single project.

An axial pathway in the form of a stone bridge half a kilometer in length leads from the western gateway to the main shrine. This layout is very similar to Beijing's Forbidden City. Jacques Dumarçay believes that the system of galleries which meet at right angles to form courtyards is the result of Chinese influence. The axial pattern, however, may be derived from a Seasian cosmological concept which was combined with the mandala, represented by the main temple (Figures 6.9 through 6.11).

The excellent state of preservation of Angkor Wat is due to two factors: a high standard of workmanship and materials, and the conversion of the temple to a Buddhist sanctuary at an early date, so that monks maintained it.

Suryavarman II's successor, Dharanindravarman II, is poorly documented. We do not know when his reign started or ended. Suryavarman II deviated from the tradition of previous kings of Angkor through his devotion to Visnu; Dharanindravarman made an even greater departure from the norm through his Buddhist faith. His son went even further in stamping Buddhism on the architecture and society of Angkor, but only after an intervening period of turmoil.

The mystery of events in Angkor after the construction of Angkor Wat continues with the next ruler, Yasovarman II. His reign began sometime between 1155 and 1160. His ancestry is unknown. After about five years he was overthrown by an official who took the title Tribhuvanadityavarman.



**Figure 6.9** Plan of Angkor Wat

The latter ruled for about 10 years, and then was killed in a Cham invasion in 1177.<sup>63</sup>

According to Coedès' reconstruction of events, Champa and Dai Viet formed an alliance, after which Champa, with its northern border secure, invaded Cambodia. The Cham first came in chariots, thus overland, but failed to win a decisive victory. They then sent another force up the Mekong which succeeded in sacking Angkor.<sup>64</sup>

Jayavarman VII, son of Dharanindravarman, who had been deposed sometime around 1155 to 1160, had been a military commander who fought in Champa. He must have had an army and waterborne troops of his own, including Cham allies; he counterattacked, fighting a major battle on the Great Lake, which was glorified in bas-reliefs on the Bayon temple which he built at the center of Angkor, and at Banteay Chhmar in northwestern Cambodia. Angkor did not have a united army; like the rest of Southeast Asia and Europe at this period the armed forces were composed of companies responsible to



**Figure 6.10** General view of Angkor Wat



**Figure 6.11** Angkor Wat Relief of Syam Kuk soldiers, Angkor Wat

individual commanders. The war-like Jayavarman VII standardized weaponry and introduced ballistae from China.<sup>65</sup> In 1181 he was crowned king.

The Khmer Empire reached its maximum size under Jayavarman VII. He formed an alliance with a young Cham noble whom he put in command of Khmer troops. They succeeded in defeating the Cham army, but later the alliance turned sour, and the Cham noble vanished. Champa was ruled by Khmer appointees until 1220. Events of this period are confused; alliances shifted and reformed. In one example, a Khmer army with Burmese and Siamese troops invaded Dai Viet in 1207.<sup>66</sup> Further battles with Dai Viet ensued until 1220. The Khmer Empire reached its most northerly point, according to an inscription set up on the west bank of the Mekong opposite Vientiane in 1186.

### Jayavarman VII, the builder

Jayavarman VII was not only militaristic; he changed much of Angkor, which may have lain in ruins following the Cham invasion. He reconstructed the royal citadel of Angkor Thom, turning it into a mandala. Like his father, Jayavarman VII was a devout Buddhist, but he followed tradition in appointing a Brahmin as his chief of religion (*purohita*). The Brahmin was from Narapatidesa, which some historians identify with Myanmar (another Buddhist kingdom where Narapatisithu was then king).

He built huge temples in several parts of his kingdom. He expanded the road system. One major road ran north to Phimai, another west toward Lopburi. Two others ran east. One road leads toward Wat Phu near the border of Cambodia and Laos, and probably connected Angkor to the route across the Annamite mountain chain to the My Son area. These roads may have fulfilled both military and economic functions.<sup>67</sup> Overland communication was highly developed at this time. He founded 102 hospitals with stone temples along the roads, of which about 30 have been located. He assigned 81,640 men and women from 838 villages to supply the hospitals with rice, clothing, honey, wax, and fruit. Besides the hospitals, he also built 121 rest houses along the roads, spaced approximately 15 kilometers (one day's journey) apart. These still functioned in 1296.

He left many inscriptions in Sanskrit from the first part of his reign, but there the epigraphic trail ends. Jayavarman VII's reign lasted at least until 1218; we do not know his exact date of death.

At the end of the Middle Classic, Angkor was at the height of its glory. The empire's fate took a different turn in the Late Classic.

## ANGKOR THOM

In 1191 Jayavarman VII moved to the reconstructed royal complex at Angkor Thom from a temporary palace which he then transformed into a temple complex called Preah Khan, dedicated to his father as a bodhisattva. Angkor Thom ("Great Capital") resembled traditional palaces of Beijing and Post-classic Seasia (existing examples include palace complexes in Bangkok, Mandalay, Yogyakarta, and Surakarta): these are vast walled complexes containing offices and living quarters for religious and



administrative officials, and religious sanctuaries. Angkor Thom is surrounded by a wall 3 kilometers long and 8 meters high on all four sides and a water-filled moat 100 meters wide.

The four corners of Angkor Thom are marked by temples which contain steles recording their construction by Jayavarman VII. The inscription at the southeast corner compares Angkor to the city of Indra and the 33 gods, at the center of which is a garden with a meeting hall where Brahma comes in the form of an ever-young chieftain, multiplying his face, one to greet each god. This inscription explains the warrior headdresses of the four faces over each gate, and forms the hallmark of Jayavarman VII structures all over the former empire, although other explanations have also been proposed.

According to legend, Indra became the ruler of the celestial palace after the gods were defeated by the asuras (demons). As the gods were fleeing, Indra's chariot collided with Garuda and was deflected toward the asuras. The asuras, who thought he was counterattacking, ran away and the astonished gods snatched victory from the jaws of defeat. Sculptures of Indra's three-headed elephant Airavata found at all gates to Angkor Thom symbolize his protection of the city (Figure 6.12).

It has been hypothesized, based on the balustrades over the moats which depict *devas* and *asuras* holding the body of a serpent, that the whole complex represents the churning of *amerta*; a statue of a turtle who acted as the pivot was found buried in front of one gate. It is probable that Angkor Thom's symbolism was multivalent.

The royal palace where the king and his family lived covers 15 hectares in the northwest corner of the complex and is enclosed by its own wall. An oath of loyalty for officials is carved on the east entrance



**Figure 6.12** Angkor Thom gateway: Face of Brahma, flanked by Indra's three-headed elephant



pavilion. Jayavarman VII kept the basic plan of the palace compound laid out by Suryavarman I: an east-west axis with the palace at the western end. An earlier palace had stood there, but its layout has not been discovered.

In the early twelfth century Suryavarman II created a road for parades in front of the palace. The king and his court could appear on the Elephant Terrace at the eastern entrance to their domestic area to watch parades and other spectacles, which would have included elephants like those shown on the terrace's front wall. Jayavarman VII made it longer and added reliefs of hunting scenes and a polo match (which may have been played in the field in front of the terrace). At the north end he built what is now called the Terrace of the Leper King, which may have been a place where the king rendered public judgments. A statue found here is commonly identified as a portrait of Jayavarman VII; however, it is a Dharmaraja (righteous king in Buddhist terminology) who is also Yama (Judge of the Dead), according to a fifteenth-century inscription carved on it.

Behind the terrace was the wooden palace, probably beautifully carved and painted, built by Suryavarman I. A thick layer of ash found by archaeologists is all that remains of it. It was burnt to the ground, probably when the Cham conquered Angkor. The new palace built by Jayavarman VII is probably illustrated in the bas-reliefs of the Bayon.

Most of what has been written about specific parts of the palace is based on conjecture. Only a few parts of the royal palace have been systematically excavated. We will only understand the functions of the various parts of Angkor Thom at different periods when archaeologists carry out large-scale excavations. The entire southern half of Angkor Thom, covering 4.5 square kilometers, has never been excavated. It is still mostly covered by thick forest. A French archaeologist devoted much time and energy cutting trails through the jungle, and found a network of roads, canals, stone structures, and ponds.<sup>68</sup> This pattern was confirmed in 2012 when a new remote-sensing technique called Lidar was used to map the surface of the ground under the forest canopy. The Lidar survey found hundreds of what appear to be house mounds laid out in a grid pattern divided by streets and perhaps ditches. These features cover the entire southern half and northeastern quarter of Angkor Thom, the area outside the east wall, much of the interior of Angkor Wat and Preah Khan, and areas outside the moats of those temples. The geometrical regularity which appears to have been characteristic of the eleventh and twelfth centuries reconfirms the impression that Khmer society of this period was highly centralized and regimented.

The implications of the Lidar survey of 2012 are still being processed. New archaeological excavations are being conducted at Angkor Wat and on Phnom Kulen to investigate some of the many new sites revealed by this technique. More Lidar surveys have been conducted in areas not studied in the initial project. Much new knowledge of ancient Angkor will be available in a few years.

## TEMPLES OF JAYAVARMAN VII

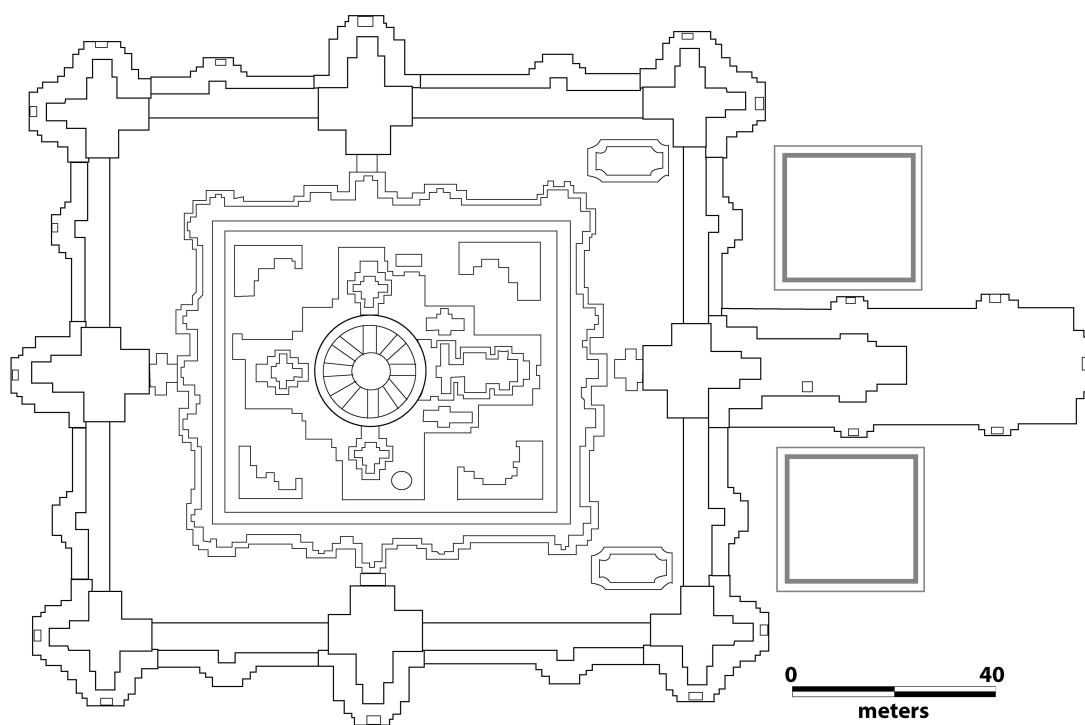
The last ruler of Middle Classic Angkor built or modified a huge number of buildings all over his empire. In the limited space available in this book, it is only possible to give a general impression of his activity.

## Bayon

Bayon, a very complex temple at the geometrical center of Angkor Thom, symbolized Mount Meru at the center of the universe (Figure 6.13). The plan of the building was revised several times. At its center is a tall tower in which a statue of a Buddharaja once stood. Jayavarman VII's most famous hallmark, four-faced heads, crown many towers around the central section, which is circular rather than square. This motif is found at the entrance to Angkor Thom and most of the complexes he built. It has been asserted that these are representations of the Buddhist deity Lokeshvara in one of his many forms, but discussion on this point continues.<sup>69</sup>

The original designers may have planned to build a mandala representing the empire, with each chapel representing a province (similar to Candi Plaosan in Java). In the second stage, the monument was rebuilt as a rectangle, perhaps symbolizing the administrative structure of the kingdom. In the third stage, the courtyard of the first level was raised. In the fourth stage, 16 structures were built, then immediately demolished, the doorways to the first gallery closed, and the face-bearing towers built, in an apparent use of the construction process as a metaphor for the fortunes of the kingdom.

The towers are surrounded by walls carved with almost 1,200 meters of bas-reliefs, almost twice as long as at Angkor Wat. The internal gallery reliefs consist of Saivaitic themes carved under Jayavarman



**Figure 6.13** Plan of Bayon

VIII. The Buddha image which originally occupied a place in the shrine was smashed, and fragments of it now rest on an ancient platform south of the road leading east from the royal palace.

As at Angkor Wat, the reliefs at the Bayon do not follow a narrative sequence. Jayavarman VII's army receives much attention. A king, probably Jayavarman VII, appears in several areas, once on a raft, another time on an elephant in a procession which is passing through a forest. An inscription suggests that the king had been a hermit before he ascended the throne. The most spectacular scenes depict battles. These may depict various adversaries and alliances; our knowledge of the events of this period is insufficient to identify the temporal sequence of various wars; Cham seem to be involved fighting both with and against Khmers.

## MAJOR MONUMENTS OF JAYAVARMAN VII

### Preah Pithu

Many of Jayavarman VII's monuments seem to have been designed to harmonize Buddhism and Hinduism. The Preah Pithu complex consists of five monuments, four of which are Hindu, the other Buddhist, aligned on an east-west axis. Lintels depict such scenes as the churning of the elixir of immortality (*amerta*), Siva Nataraja dancing between Brahma and Visnu, Visnu on Garuda battling the demon Bana, and Visnu taking three steps in which he traversed the universe. The Buddhist structure has a double frieze of Buddhas and the future Buddha cutting off his princely hair.

### Ta Prohm

This temple's popular name, Ta Prohm, meaning "ancestor Brahma", derives from a statue found there. Its original name was *Rajavihara* ("royal monastery"). It was built in 1186 and contained a statue of Jayavarman VII's mother, Jayarajachudamani, in the guise of the Buddhist deity Prajnaparamita, and another of Jayamangalartha, Jayavarman VII's teacher. A total of 12,000 people were designated to support the rituals conducted in the monastery such as circumambulation of the central tower. This is one of the most popular temples in Angkor because of the preservation of tree roots growing on the structures.

### Banteay Kdei

The Banteay Kdei complex (*banteay* means a walled compound) east of Angkor may have been Jayavarman VII's first monument. One of the most amazing discoveries ever made at Angkor occurred in 2000 when a small shrine on the eastern approach to the main temple was excavated preparatory to restoration. Archaeologists discovered an enormous pit filled with more than 200 Buddha statues of different styles and periods. Some were broken before they were deposited. No explanation has been found for this action. The images are now housed in a museum near the site.

In 1963–64 Bernard Philippe Groslier excavated east of the temple near a *baray* called Sras Srang (literally “royal bathing place”) and discovered a burial ground which had been used from the ninth to sixteenth centuries, but most intensively in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The burials included urns containing ashes, food, and perfume; the wealthiest included bronze mirrors, gilded lead ingots, Chinese ceramics, and bronze statuettes of Buddhist and Hindu deities. In the late thirteenth century Zhou Daguan said that those who cremated their dead were said to be “descendants of Chinese”. It is not certain whether his remarks refer to this particular site.

## COMMON PEOPLE OF ANGKOR

Angkorian inscriptions contain what Etienne Aymonier called “interminable name lists” of people who were “given” to temples. They constitute about all that is known of the mass of the Khmer population during the Classic period. Like the *sima* inscriptions of Java, the Khmer inscriptions deal with gifts of land to temples and tax exemptions for those who lived on those lands in return for services. The Javanese inscriptions did not include people as part of the property. In theory they were probably free to leave the *sima* if they wished. In Java the status of *sima* dweller was apparently desirable, especially for those who worked for wages. The Javanese inscriptions limit the number of people of various occupations who were allowed to live in the *sima*, to prevent others from escaping tax. The Khmer inscriptions deal with the people as property. The status of most inhabitants of the Khmer Empire was closer to serfdom than in any other part of Seasia. In other regions, servitude seems to have been the consequence of some particular misfortune, either unpaid debt or capture in war; in Angkor it was the fate of normal human beings. The lists of names in the inscriptions were meant as deeds, to show that the persons named in the inscriptions were given to the temples as charitable donations by their previous owners.

Information on common people in the ninth and early tenth centuries mainly comes from royal temple inscriptions, when the major centers of power were in Roluos and Koh Ker. From about 950 to 1080, the “interminable lists” come from noble families who created religious foundations. When the Mahidharapura dynasty came to power in Angkor, they reduced some of the incentives to transfer land and people to religious foundations. They may have felt that the system was diverting too much income from the kingdom. By studying the changing data recorded in these lists, which grew to include more than 100,000 people (no longer listed by name) in the late twelfth century reign of Jayavarman VII, it has been possible to determine that families were transferred, not just individuals—another indication that status as an unfree person was inherited.<sup>70</sup>

## THE ECONOMY

During the Middle Classic, many inscriptions continued to record the sale of land. Unlike Early Classic inscriptions, there is no standard of value. Instead, it seems that the Khmer economy had regressed to

a barter system. Cattle, cloth, rice, and even spittoons could be used to buy land.<sup>71</sup> The same applies to purchase of people. It seems that Suryavarman I reduced the tax on land by 50 per cent. His motive in doing so may have been to prevent tax avoidance. This implies that rich nobles could donate land without the king's approval. From the eleventh century, kings may have used *sima* exemptions from taxation to encourage people to settle in under-developed areas.

The tax system was quite complicated. It included tax on land, according to various categories of use: riverside rice fields (which could be irrigated) were taxed more than dry-season rice fields. Tax was levied on rice and other grain, on collectors of honey and wax, and oil and clarified butter, important as lustrating liquids in temple ceremonies. Local temples had to send a portion of their income to a central temple. There was a *rajakosa* (royal treasury) which contained gold, gems, honey, wax, sugar, medicine, grain, cloth, and other miscellaneous commodities.

Inscriptions provide only a vague glimpse into the economic system of Angkor. It seems that the kingdom dictated most aspects of the distribution of goods and services. The details of how this was accomplished have not been preserved.

## SETTLEMENT

Few habitation sites of this period have been excavated in Cambodia, partly as a result of warfare in the late twentieth century. Much research was focused on Khmer sites in Khorat between 1970 and 2000, when much of Cambodia was inaccessible because of war or landmines. The site of Non Si Fan Noi from the Lopburi phase provides an idea of what a habitation site outside the Angkor region in Cambodia may have looked like at this time. The ceramic assemblage included more than 1,000 plain earthenwares compared with 22 glazed stoneware sherds. This suggests that Chinese ceramics were a luxury product in the Khmer Empire and were mainly found around Angkor.<sup>72</sup>

The term "extended boundary city" was coined to refer to Maya ceremonial centers.<sup>73</sup> It is somewhat questionable whether the term "city" should be defined so loosely as to cover an area of 1,000 square kilometers in which most of the land is and has been used for rice fields for 1,000 years. Nevertheless, since the term has been applied to Angkor, we retain it in this book. One obvious problem then is how to determine the edge of the city site. Hard evidence which could be used for comparison between a site in the Maya lowlands such as Tikal and the Angkor region requires the collection of samples along transects from the center of the capital district, Angkor Thom, measuring the density of habitation remains, until one reached a point at which this density dropped off. This point might not even exist; artifact density may decline gradually rather suddenly crossing a threshold. If this were the case, the usefulness of this category of settlement would be questionable. Such a survey would make it possible to refine estimates for the population of the Angkor extended boundary city. Estimates range from 350,000 to one million.<sup>74</sup> Research based on Lidar surveys may clarify this matter.

No research has yet been conducted in areas outside of the Angkor area to define population areas. New Lidar data and excavation in the Koh Ker area will help rectify this situation. It will take many years of research to define the settlement hierarchy which existed in the Angkorian Empire. Other parts

of the country have to be surveyed and excavated, which can only be conducted after the laborious process of demining is completed.

## CERAMICS IN ANGKOR: LOCAL AND CHINESE

The Angkorian Empire flourished at the same time as the Song dynasty in China. A Khmer inscription from Preah Einkosei at Angkor from the period 968 to 984 mentions that the treasury contained three Chinese drinking cups. A study of sherds collected in the Royal Palace site found nothing older than the tenth century.<sup>75</sup> Imported wares, mainly Chinese, comprised 10 per cent of the ceramic assemblage. White porcelain-covered boxes formed an unusually high proportion of the sherds there (6 to 10%).<sup>76</sup> Perhaps this form and colour had some ritual significance for the Khmer.

Excavations near the Bayon yielded pottery, mostly made in Cambodia, but including five Chinese celadons, 30 white wares, 20 *qingbai*, two Chinese stoneware, and three Thai ceramics. Chinese ware constituted about 5 per cent of the assemblage. Analyst Shimizu attributed this assemblage to the period between the late thirteenth and late fourteenth centuries, but it could be a century earlier, closer to the date when the library is thought to have been built.<sup>77</sup> Research in 2003 identified two phases of Chinese wares: eleventh to twelfth centuries and thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. A greater variety of shapes appeared in the later period, but the assemblage was still typified by covered boxes.

Angkor data confirm the conclusion that Chinese porcelain was more common in insular Seasia than on the mainland. Cambodia produced its own ceramics. Song-period Chinese ceramics at Angkor seem to be limited to elite areas. This reinforces the inference that a huge gulf separated the nobility from the commoners. This pattern is different from sites in Indonesia or the Philippines, where Chinese wares were widely distributed during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

In the 1880s, scholars discovered ancient ceramics distributed over an area on both sides of the Dangrek Mountain Range, from the Angkor region to Buriram in northeast Thailand,<sup>78</sup> but specialized study of Khmer ceramics only began in 1971.<sup>79</sup> Khmer ceramics were produced exclusively for the local market. Groslier wrote in 1981 that “We have no precise idea regarding the [Khmer] kilns.”<sup>80</sup> Mounds of wasters had been known to exist on Phnom Kulen since 1901, but were not examined systematically until 2007.<sup>81</sup> The hypothesis that glazed tiles were produced near major temple complexes far from Angkor, such as tenth-century Sambor Prei Kuk or twelfth-century Preah Khan (Kompong Svay) has not been tested by archaeological fieldwork.<sup>82</sup> Khmer ceramics have been described as “one of the least documented of Oriental wares”.<sup>83</sup>

Khmer potters began mass production of ceramics with the potter’s wheel at the end of the sixth or early seventh century.<sup>84</sup> The first glazed ceramics made in Southeast Asia beyond the orbit of Chinese control appeared under Indravarman and Yasovarman, who reigned from the 880s to 940s. At Roluos, archaeologists found glazed tiles, bowls, and small bottles which may have been used to hold perfume.<sup>85</sup> They were highly standardized. Pottery kilns were built along the Khmer roads, at Ban Kruat, in Banteay Meanchey in the west,<sup>86</sup> and the road to Beng Mealea and Kompong Svay.<sup>87</sup> The study of Khmer kilns, and indeed much of Khmer technology, is just beginning.



## WATER AND ANGKOR<sup>88</sup>

“Baray” is a Khmer term for large, shallow, artificial bodies of water. Despite the fact that they occupy much land around Angkor and required a large labour force to build, there are no references to the west *baray* in inscriptions.<sup>89</sup> There is no indication that the *baray* were part of any ritual or cosmological system.<sup>90</sup> Their functions are unknown. Each of the two largest *baray* is about 8 kilometers from east to west and 2 kilometers from north to south. The west *baray*, the last to be built, was probably finished in the early eleventh century, either by Suryavarman I or Udayadityavarman II. It was overgrown with swamp forest by the sixteenth century.<sup>91</sup> The artificial island in the middle of the west *baray*, the West Mebon, was probably built by Udayadityavarman II (1050–1066), who also built the Baphuon (based on similarity in carving styles). The *baray* lie perpendicular to the slope of the land as though to capture water flowing toward the Great Lake.

Because they resemble reservoirs used to irrigate rice fields, it was at first assumed that this was their purpose. This theory has now been discarded. They are too shallow to hold enough water for this purpose, and they have no outlets on their downhill sides. Another theory holds that they were created for symbolic purposes. No evidence of this has been discovered either. Some form of symbolism was possibly one of their purposes, though it is unlikely that this function provided the main or only motivation for the large outlay of resources which their construction necessitated.

Another theory is that the *baray* were part of a system with canals both upstream and downstream meant to serve as transport facilities. Some canals lead to the east foot of the Kulen Plateau, which was the site of a large quarry to provide stone for the Angkor temples. This stone could have been shipped by water much more easily than by land. The agrarian population depended on *trapeang*, smaller, deeper pools, for water for both daily life and agriculture. There seems to be no connection between the *trapeang* system and the *baray* and canal network. The population northwest of Angkor Thom, upstream from the *baray*, seems to have been as dense as in the southern and central areas.<sup>92</sup>

The consensus which emerged from the Greater Angkor Project in the early 2000s is that the *baray* must be seen in the context of a large and complex system meant to prevent or minimize the effects of too much or too little water.<sup>93</sup> The *baray* could have provided a stable water table and some water for irrigation without sluices.<sup>94</sup>

Another controversy concerns the relationship between temple complexes and land use. At least some complexes were surrounded by significant numbers of people who provided services to priests and bureaucrats, but this cannot be assumed to be true of all of them without concrete evidence. Two maps which probably date from the Middle Classic period are carved on a stone doorframe at the North Kleang site, Angkor Thom. They depict land divisions and water courses.<sup>95</sup> Modern mapping projects aimed at reconstructing Angkor’s spatial layout demonstrate that certain field patterns are coordinated with temple locations, and probably were laid out when the temples were constructed. One study indicated that large-scale networks of water distribution existed, but the relationship between this infrastructure and settlement patterns was not entirely clear.<sup>96</sup> The field systems of the Angkor period have been reconstructed: the fields were small (0.4–0.5 hectare), and the bunds between the fields were aligned with temples or ponds. The fields were roughly square and arranged in grids,<sup>97</sup> suggesting centralized land management.

## RELIGIONS OF THE CLASSIC PERIOD

Religious preferences in temples and statuary reflect the inclinations of the royalty, which changed rather drastically from one reign to the next. There is no indication that the common people had any choice in the matter. Buddhism became fashionable in Cambodia in the mid-tenth century, coexisting with Saivism and (to a lesser extent) Vaisnavism. Suryavarman II clearly favoured Visnu, whereas Jayavarman VII espoused esoteric Buddhist deities which had been known in Angkor since the tenth century: Prajnaparamita, Buddha, Lokeshvara, and Hevajra.<sup>98</sup> He also incorporated his mother and father into the pantheon, as other Southeast Asian rulers were fond of doing.

In the thirteenth century, elements of Theravada Buddhism began to appear. Small Theravada structures appeared during that century. The APSARA Authority has identified 80 Theravada Buddhist terraces, some of which existed before Zhou Daguan's visit to Angkor in 1296–1297, and the first Pali inscription dated in 1308. Zhou Daguan mentioned Theravada Buddhists. Some Hindu temples were converted for Buddhist use by adding a terrace to the eastern side, double *sema* stones, and an encircling wall.<sup>99</sup>

A novice monk of Mon ancestry and four others accompanied a diplomatic mission from Myanmar to Sri Lanka in 1180 where Buddhism was closer to the Theravada form, and remained there for 10 years. One of the other monks, according to the *Glass Palace Chronicle* of Myanmar, was a son of the King of Cambodia, who at this period was Jayavarman VII.

## THE KHMER EMPIRE IN KHORAT AND THE CHAO PHRAYA BASIN

Angkor's power extended far beyond the boundaries of modern Cambodia, into Laos and Thailand, where about 300 Khmer sites have been identified. The Khmer Empire of the Middle Classic established outposts as far north as Sakon Nakhon in the central Mekong valley; Phimai, on the Khorat Plateau; Lopburi, Suphanburi, and Ratburi, lower Chao Phraya valley; and Phitsanulok, Sawankhalok, and Sukhothai in the north central plain of Thailand. The Mahidharapura dynasty, which greatly expanded Angkor's jurisdiction, came from the Phimai region of northeast Thailand, replacing the earlier line descended from Jayavarman II, who came from the Mekong Delta. The Mahidharapura dynasty changed such basic institutions as royal succession and the relationship between the king and his officials. By the end of the twelfth century, Buddhism was challenging Hinduism as the favoured religion. The devaraja cult was discontinued.

The oldest inscription in Phimai is in Sanskrit and invokes Buddha and King Suryavarman. Jayavarman VI, first ruler of the Mahidharapura dynasty, left inscriptions at Phimai and Wat Phu. He may have lived in Phimai rather than Angkor. The Middle Classic corresponds to the Lopburi Phase in Thailand. A total of 76 sites from this phase have been identified, many marked by rectangular reservoirs and temple compounds. The most famous is Prasat Hin Phimai. Rectangular ramparts are often found near Khmer temples in Thailand; their purpose is unknown. There is no evidence that they were inhabited.

One theory is that they were “structured gardens with ponds and circulating water, similar to gardens frequently associated historically in Java with temples and elite class compounds.”<sup>100</sup>

Many of the old village sites surrounded by ramparts were no longer inhabited. Many Angkorian temples in Khorat are found in areas which had not been occupied in the Preclassic or Protoclassic periods. Newly occupied areas were often near deposits of salt and iron; others were along trade routes. Salt may have been exported to Angkor along the road network.<sup>101</sup> Most sites seem to represent small, unprotected villages, possibly signifying more stable conditions compared with the preceding Muang Sema phase. The temples may have been built to attract population and to encourage exploitation of new land, rather than to serve an existing population. Labour may have been more mobile here compared with the central Angkor area.

## PHIMAI

Phimai is a modern town in northeast Thailand 225 kilometers from Angkor. Its location is strategically located on an ancient trade route from Khorat to the Chao Phraya Delta.<sup>102</sup> The name is derived from its Middle Classic Sanskrit name, Vimayapura. The area had been inhabited at the beginning of the Preclassic, 1000 BCE. During the Tamyae Phase, 1000 to 600 BCE, three sites with ramparts appeared. This increased to seven in the Prasat Phase, 600 to 200 BCE, and reached a peak of 15 in the Phimai Phase (300 BCE–300 CE), when the famous Phimai Black pottery appeared. Ban Suai, at the southeast corner of modern Phimai, may have been settled between 200 and 300 BCE.<sup>103</sup> Mahendravarman (circa 550–611) campaigned in Khorat, and set up an inscription in Phimai.<sup>104</sup> A brick shrine was built here in the Early Classic Muang Sema phase, 600 to 1000 CE, but its nature is unclear.<sup>105</sup> Phimai derived some of its importance from its location on a trade route from Khorat to the Chao Phraya Delta. Rajendravarman II (944–968) had some power in Khorat, but most Khmer temples there were only built after 1000.

In the Middle Classic, Lopburi Phase (1000–1300), rectangular sites first appeared, with reservoirs and walled temple compounds. The largest of these was built on the site of modern Phimai. Also found in the vicinity are sites consisting of mounds within rectangular earth walls, perhaps serving as formal gardens. During the Lopburi Phase the economic system changed significantly. Two large temples (Prasat Hin Phimai and Prasat Phanom Wan) and several smaller ones became centers of population and economic activity. This suggests a greater level of hierarchization of society compared with the Early Classic. The Phimai ruler in 1112, Virendradhipativarman, is portrayed in the bas-reliefs in the southern gallery of Angkor Wat riding a war elephant and leading his troops in a procession of Suryavarman II's army. Inscription K. 397, dated 1108, in the temple of Prasat Hin Phimai, mentions the erection of a statue by him, identified as the general of the Kamraten Jagat Vimaya.<sup>106</sup>

Prasat (temple) Hin Phimai is one of the largest Khmer complexes. Its central tower may have formed the prototype for Angkor Wat. The main construction of the temple probably took place during the reign of Jayavarman VI, founder of the dynasty, in the late eleventh century, though earlier edifices existed

there.<sup>107</sup> The structure is unusual in many respects. One of these is that it is oriented south-southeast. Lintels from this period combine Buddhist and Hindu themes. Buddhist scenes depicted include the earth goddess Dharani wringing out her hair; Buddha in *vitarka mudra*; the Buddhist deity Vajrasattva; and Trailokyavijaya (who, according to esoteric Buddhists, converted Siva to Buddhism). Inscription K. 954 dated 1041 found there mentions Siva and Buddha.

Phimai was mainly Buddhist, but Hindu elements include small linggas found in one building, lintels with Krisna and Visnu scenes, and a dancing, multi-armed deity who is normally interpreted as Siva Nataraja, although another theory suggests that it may represent a Buddhist figure. A tenth-century stele from Khorat now in the Bangkok National Museum shows Buddha on *naga*, a Prajnaparamita, a Tara, Avalokitesvara with four arms, and another with eight arms, and a dancing Vajrapani. The lintels inside the main temple may have been chosen to symbolize the unity of body, speech, and mind, and *Guhyasamājatantra* mandala.<sup>108</sup>

It is often assumed that Buddha seated on a seven-head *naga* represents a story according to which Buddha was meditating on the bank of the Nairanjana River when a flood came. The *naga* Mucalinda emerged from the river and protected him with his coils and his seven hoods. Peter Sharrock has pointed out the fact that the Mucalinda myth is not significant in Mahayana societies. In the tenth century, Buddha sitting on a *naga* throne symbolized Vairocana, the main Buddha in the *Vajradhātumaṇḍala*. This iconography is evidence for the presence of tantrism. This icon may have travelled from Phimai to Angkor, where Inscription K. 266 (from Bat Chum, built around 953) is dedicated to Vajrapani, Buddha, and Divyadevi (Prajnaparamita). The temple was sponsored by Kavindrarmathana, Buddhist architect and military leader of Rajendravarman (reigned 944–968) to give thanks to Vajrapani for a victory over the Cham. During the reign of Jayavarman V, tantric Buddhist deities were referred to as military protectors.

Jayavarman VII added several major structures, including khleang (storehouses) similar to those at Angkor Thom. The interpretation that these structures had a mundane purpose is based on grindstones found there.

The very important Sab Bak inscription (K. 1158) was found 40 kilometers southwest of Phimai. No other remains were found in the vicinity. It is dated 1066, the last year of Udayadityavarman II's reign. The first part of the inscription, in Sanskrit, praises Sri Samāja, the main deity in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. The inscription was set up by someone named Vrah Danus, who has installed Jinās and other images in a place of pilgrimage, and hopes to be reborn in Kambuja, where he believes he will eventually be able to attain enlightenment. (Apparently he felt that he was not then living in Kambuja; he is distinguishing between Khorat and the area south of the Dangrek range.) The second part in Khmer concerns nine Buddhist images set up by Sri Satyavarman, who had supernatural powers, to protect the Khmer lands against Java. The statues became old, so a teacher renovated them. Dhanus, his pupil, reinstalled them in 1066. According to the Wat Sithor inscription (K. 111), a person named Kirtipandita who lived in the tenth century had reinstalled more than nine or 10 tantric images originally set up by Satyavarman on the “eastern hill”.<sup>109</sup> Griffiths proposed that Abhayagiri referred to the Ratubaka Plateau in central Java. Conti, however, thinks that the site must have been somewhere near Sab Bak.<sup>110</sup>

## OTHER MAJOR KHMER SITES IN THAILAND

At Phnom Rung in southwest Khorat, a long stone axis leads to temple on a volcanic peak 350 meters high. The site contains many inscriptions from the tenth through thirteenth centuries. These inscriptions appear to have been set up by local rulers of the line of Narendraditya who were independent of Angkor.

Large barays and a temple at Phanom Wan suggest that this was an important site. Inscriptions dated 891, 1055, and 1082 indicate that the temple was used for at least 200 years. The main deity worshipped seems to have varied at different periods. Khmer temples in Thailand combine Cambodian styles from different periods, making it difficult to date them or understand their symbolism. The temple was used for Śaivite worship at one time but by the twelfth century the temple had been converted to Buddhism.

The modern name Lopburi for a city in east-central Thailand is derived from Sanskrit Lavapura, also known as Lavo. The word Lavapura has been found on two medals in the U Thong area. According to chronicles, people from here formed the kingdom of Haripunjaya in the seventh century; scholarly sources suggest that a date in the early ninth century is more likely. Lavo sent a mission to China in 1001, and is mentioned in the *Song Shi* in conjunction with Tambralingga in the records for that year. In the early eleventh century Lavo was attacked by Haripunjaya; Jayavarman, who may have been a Khmer noble from Tambralingga, seized Lopburi in the confusion, then usurped the throne of Angkor itself before he was in turn overthrown by Suryavarman I around 1007.

Lopburi then became a province ruled by governors sent from Angkor, but from time to time tried to become independent. A Chinese mission went to Lavo in 1115, though they did not consider it a *kuo*, meaning “independent country”. In 1155 a mission brought elephants to China from *Zhenla Luo-hu*, “Cambodia Lopburi”. This could either mean “Lopburi part of Cambodia”. or “Lopburi near Cambodia”. These two missions came during periods of political turmoil in Cambodia, when Lavo exploited instability in its overlord’s capital to act on its own.

The parade of the Angkorian army on the south gallery of Angkor Wat depicts a troop identified in an accompanying inscription as Syam Kuk from *Ivo/lavodayapura*. An inscription of 1167 from Nakhon Sawan (Thai pronunciation of Sanskrit *Nagara Swarga*, “City of Heaven”) mentions King Dharmasoka, whose kingdom may have been Lavo. Jayavarman VII sent a statue to Lavo in the late twelfth century; possibly it was a statue of Avalokitesvara which has been found there. Copies of the same statue were sent to 22 other cities, probably as symbols of Angkorian sovereignty.

The ancient city of Suphanburi in the lower Chao Phraya valley derives its name from *Suvarnapura*, “Golden City” in Sanskrit. In the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, Jayavarman VII sent a statue to this place to demonstrate his control over the area. Suphanburi was a local center of power; its dominion covered areas west of the Chao Phraya, including Nakhon Pathom, Ratburi, and Phetburi. It may have exercised some influence over Nakhon Si Thammarat in the isthmian region of the Siam-Malay Peninsula. It may have had some relationship to the polity known to the Chinese in the fourteenth century as Xian (“Shan”, Siam).

Jayavarman VII was able to project his power as far west as Muang Sing in Kanchanaburi Province. The complex has a layout like Angkor Wat and other major temples, with an axis leading between buildings usually termed libraries and a central tower. In Khorat, the Khmer Empire established 32 hospitals

and eight houses of fire along the roads. In central and western Thailand there were fewer such sites. The area was well connected to Angkor. Roads led from Angkor to Lopburi and Kanchanaburi. Jayavarman VII sponsored construction in the major Early Classic centers at Nakhon Pathom, U Thong, and Ku Bua as well as Lopburi. Among the resources which may have attracted the Khmer to the western region were lead and tin.<sup>111</sup>

The Khmer tried to conquer what is now northern Thailand, but with limited success. The authority of Jayavarman VII reached as far north as Sukhothai. A kingdom named Haripunjaya probably was founded in the Early Classic period. Local chronicles say that the royal dynasty was founded by a queen from Lopburi. In the twelfth century Haripunjaya defeated a Khmer invasion.

Prayers were offered at Prasat Hin Phimai for Indravarman III after his death in 1243,<sup>112</sup> but that was the end of Angkor's rule in Khorat.

## TAMBRALINGGA

The name Tambralingga first appeared in the *Mahaniddesa* of the second or third century in Pali form as Tamali.<sup>113</sup> Once again, our principal historical evidence for this polity comes from Chinese texts. Song Dynasty sources mention a country named *Danliumei* which sent missions in 1001, 1016, and 1070. Its Tamil name (Mādāma-liṅgam) appears in the list of Srivijaya's ports conquered by the Cholas in 1025 or 1026. During the height of the Angkorian Empire in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it may have been a vassal of Cambodia; in the next century it may have joined Sanfoqi's mandala. Tambralingga moved from one mandala to another as the relative powers of the overlords waxed and waned. Wolters thought that Tambralingga already belonged to Srivijaya's mandala before the mission of 1001.<sup>114</sup> Most of our information from Chinese sources dates from the Late Classic. The name Nakhon Si Thammarat (Nagara Sri Dharmaraja in Sanskrit) appears in the late twelfth century. This is still the name of the largest city in this part of Thailand.

Nakhon Si Thammarat supplanted Chaiya as the most prolific source of archaeological remains in this region during the Middle Classic. Inscription 28 (according to the registration system used for inscriptions in Thailand), which is now in Wat Mahathat, Nakhon Si Thammarat, consists of 10 Brahmi letters in Southeast Asian style. Coedès dated it to the fifth or sixth century; Preecha Noonsuk and Bhattacharya dated it to the sixth or seventh century, and read it as *tambralingesvara* ("Lord of Tambralingga"). Inscription 29 in the same location consists of two parts: one with Tamil script and language, the other Old Khmer script in Sanskrit. Coedès dated it to the ninth century, Veeraprajak to the thirteenth century. It may refer to religion.<sup>115</sup> The stupa was probably founded in the tenth century.

In its earlier phase, Hinduism seems to have been popular in Tambralingga. Five clusters of Brahmanical remains have been found in the area. Cluster Two has the most sites (45); Cluster Four along the Maying River covers the largest area. At Wat Mokhlan is a large quantity of fragments of Khmer-style sandstone buildings, including 20 lintels or thresholds, nine door frames, and 139 pillars which Preecha Noonsuk dated stylistically to the seventh or eighth century. Cluster Five, with 17 sites, coincides with modern Nakhon Si Thammarat city. The southernmost group may be the oldest; seven Visnu statues



have been found there. Visnu and Siva coexisted in both groups. Tamil-style objects are relatively common, including a lingga and yoni dated to the ninth century; a bronze Visnu head dated mid-tenth century, two statues of Vatuka-Bhairava, tenth century, an eleventh-century Visnu, and a Surya, tenth to eleventh century, consistent with Stanley O'Connor's observation regarding the irruption of Tamil influence in the peninsula during this period around the time of the Chola invasion.<sup>116</sup>

The *Si Thammasok* dynasty is mentioned in an inscription found at Dong Mae Nang Muang in Nakhon Sawan Province, dated 1167. One side is written in Pali, the other side in Khmer with some Thai words. Both used Khmer script. Coedès suggested that the capital of this dynasty was in Lavo. It is possible that the rulers of Late Classic Tambralingga came from Lavo; this would explain the use of Khmer script in inscription of 1230 (No. 24) from Chaiya. Why he moved south is unclear.<sup>117</sup> By the thirteenth century, Tambralingga had become Theravada. Thai Inscription Number 1 from Sukhothai "clearly stated that the *Sangharaja* (the leader of all the monks) who was most knowledgeable in the Buddhist teachings in Sukhothai was from Sri Dharmaraja".<sup>118</sup>

## Geography and resources

One of this region's main assets is its large area suitable for rice agriculture. There are more than 70 Classic sites in the coastal plain near the rice lands. This may have been the most densely populated part of the peninsula in the Middle Classic.<sup>119</sup> The hinterland provided forest products, especially fragrant woods and tin, highly prized by foreigners.<sup>120</sup> Tambralingga was well-connected to transpeninsular routes.

## Archaeology and ceramics

Chinese ceramics continued to be imported to southeast Thailand during the Middle Classic. At Satingphra, Chinese ware constituted 8.5 per cent of the ceramic assemblage of the tenth century, 14.3 per cent during the eleventh century.<sup>121</sup> The city of Nakhon Si Thammarat has yielded Chinese wares of Yueh, *qingbai*, black ware, Ding type white ware, Xicun, and Chaozhou.<sup>122</sup> Many of these are associated with old monasteries. Wat Mahathat yielded dense remains from the Middle Classic. Many cream-colored kendis and other fine-paste ware sherds were also recovered; these may have been made in the Satingphra area. Pa-O was probably a major producer of ritual pouring vessels (kendis), which were exported to Sumatra, Java, and possibly the Philippines.<sup>123</sup>

## SRIVIJAYA, 900 TO 1030

During the tenth century, Srivijaya seems to have fared well, though there are signs that parts of the mandala were loosening their ties to it by sending missions to China. Jambi, not far north of Srivijaya

mandala's base on the Musi, had resumed sending missions in the ninth century. In 904 a Srivijayan was appointed head of the foreign quarter in Fujian,<sup>124</sup> a clear sign of the mandala's prestige. After China was reunified by the Song dynasty, luxury goods from the South Seas were still an imperial monopoly; only licensed dealers could buy them at government warehouses in Quanzhou and Guangzhou, in fixed quantities and at fixed prices. Chinese caught trading with foreigners were branded on the face and exiled.<sup>125</sup>

After 904, Chinese records no longer mention *Shīlǐfóshì*. Instead, the characters used for the south-east Sumatran mandala are *Sānfóqí* 三佛齊 which literally mean "Three Vijayas". *Sānfóqí* sent many missions to the Song during the tenth century. In 960 one sent by King Sri Udayaditya arrived just a few months after the Song took power. Among the tribute brought by the mission was a rhinoceros horn. The Chinese found a natural pattern on the horn that resembled the character "Song". The ruler emperor presented this as evidence that he had the true mandate of heaven. He wore a belt hook made from this horn when making official sacrifices at the altar of heaven.<sup>126</sup> For the next 200 years, Sumatran envoys were shown particular favour by Song rulers. In 1003 a *Sānfóqí* embassy reported that a temple had been built in Sumatra to pray for the emperor's longevity. *Sānfóqí* sent five more missions between 1004 and 1018. In 1172 more than 10 rich *Sānfóqí* merchants lived in Quanzhou.<sup>127</sup>

*Sānfóqí* was active in the Buddhist international network. A Chinese monk returning from India via *Sānfóqí* in 983 met an Indian priest there.<sup>128</sup> A Nepalese manuscript written about 1015 contains drawings of renowned Buddhist images of the world, including a Lokanatha in Suvarṇanapura Srivijayapura. In the first decade of the tenth century the *Sānfóqí*<sup>129</sup> ruler *Chūdāmaṇivarmadeva* built Buddhist temples in China and south India. Important Buddhist literature was composed during his reign. The kingdom was sufficiently important that the monk Atisa moved there from India and stayed for 12 or 13 years before going to Tibet. Atisa described the place where he lived, Sriwijayanagara, as being in Malayagiri in Suvarṇadvīpa.

The name *Sānfóqí* is ambiguous. O.W. Wolters believed that by 1080 *Sānfóqí* was in Malayu/Jambi, not Palembang. When did this transfer take place? Ma Guan, who sailed with a Chinese fleet which visited Southeast Asia in the fifteenth century, thought that *Sānfóqí* was synonymous with Palembang, and also with *Gùgǎng* ("Old Harbor"), a term first used in 1349 by the merchant Wang Dayuan.<sup>130</sup> Wolters suggested that Ma was wrong in thinking that *Gùgǎng* had always denoted a country. Wolters argued that the term was first coined to refer to a waterway or navigable channel, the Musi estuary. Wolters concluded that "Ma Huan's evidence about the equivalence of San-fo-ch'i and the Palembang Old Channel cannot, therefore, be cited to prove that San-fo-ch'i [. . .] had its centre in the Palembang area".<sup>131</sup> Thus, references to *Sānfóqí* in the tenth and early eleventh centuries could relate either to Palembang or Jambi. "Malayagiri" may or may not be connected with Malayu in Jambi. There is much archaeological evidence of Buddhist activity in Malayu Jambi in the eleventh century, but the wholesale destruction of ancient sites in Palembang may have removed evidence for similar developments there.

*Sānfóqí* was also well connected with the Arabo-Persian region in the early eleventh century. In 1018 a tribute mission brought 81,680 units (we do not know how much these units represented) of frankincense and an unknown number of other items from Arab countries as well as Indonesian products (sandalwood, pepper, nutmeg, and cloves).<sup>132</sup>

## The Chola invasion of 1025

The relationship between Srivijaya and the rulers of south India had been cordial since the seventh century. In 1005 the ruler of Srivijaya cooperated with the ruler of south India to build a Buddhist temple. The Larger Leiden Grant issued by the Cholas in 1006 refers to “the lofty shrine of Buddha in the Chulamanivarma vihara which the ruler of Śrīvijaya and Kataha, Mara Vijayottungavarman of the Sailendra family with the *makara* crest had erected in the name of his father” in Nagapattinam.<sup>133</sup> After more than 300 years, this friendship suddenly evaporated. According to an inscription of 1030 at Tanjor, the capital of the Chola kingdom, Rajendra Chola, captured Sanggramavijayottungavarman, king of Kadaram (which for the Cholas might have symbolized the entire Straits of Melaka), seized his great war gate, and confiscated his riches. Kadaram is mentioned twice in the inscription: first when it is reported that its king was captured, and second in the list of territories of Srivijaya which Rajendra attacked. The inscription does not give any reason for the invasion.

The Tiruvalangadu inscription dated 1017–1018 calls Rajendra Chola “the victor of Kataha”. Majumdar concluded that Kedah was attacked in 1017–1018, but the attack was not successful. Only in 1025 was victory achieved.<sup>134</sup> The introduction to an inscription dated 1022–1023 calls Rajendra the ruler of Gangge and Kadaram. However, the Tiruvalangadu inscription is written in two languages. The first part consists of 524 lines in Tamil, while the second has 271 lines of Sanskrit. Both are dated in the sixth year of Rajendra’s reign, but the Sanskrit section is believed to have been added subsequently. An inscription from the ninth year of his reign does not mention the conquest of Kataha, but this thirteenth year reports Rajendra’s victories in India. The Tanjor inscription was also written in his thirteenth year; the report of the Tirumalai inscription is repeated, and the conquest of the Straits of Melaka is appended.

No inscriptions of the Middle Classic have been found in Kedah. A place called *Ku-lo* on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula was mentioned in a Tamil sailing itinerary of 1015 as recorded by the *Song Shi*. In 1012 Arab merchants had come to Guangzhou on a *Ku-lo* ship.<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, Kedah was a very important port, especially for the south Indians. When Srivijaya is mentioned in Tamil inscriptions of the early eleventh century, usually the ruler is designated as the king of Kedah *and* Srivijaya.

The names of the rulers of Śrīvijaya and Kedah at the time of the Chola attacks are Maravijayottungavarman (1008 to about 1025) and Sanggramavijayottungavarman. It was the latter whom Rajendra Chola I, king of the Chola Empire, claims to have attacked and conquered along with a string of ports in the Straits of Melaka, which are listed in an inscription at a temple in the Chola capital Tanjor of 1030–31. The list starts with Srivijaya (by which perhaps Palembang is meant), then lists in no particular order Panai on the northeast coast of Sumatra, Malayu, and Lamuri (Aceh). On the mainland the inscription lists Takkola, Langkasuka, and Kadaram (Kedah). No other ruler is mentioned, implying that Sanggramavijayottungavarman ruled them all. He was captured and taken to India, after which we know nothing more about his fate. The Tanjor inscription mentions that all his treasure and his “great war gate” were taken back as booty. Whether the gate actually existed is not certain; the inscription is written in poetic form, and some words may have been inserted *metris causa*.

Tamils ruled the northern end of the straits for the next century before the Chola kingdom itself fell into decline. Śrīvijaya’s mandala was never reconstituted; in fact, it may already have been weakening.

After 1030 the ports which had comprised the thalassocracy became independent, and some, especially Malayu Jambi, became very prosperous in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

No sources explain the unprecedented invasion of the Straits of Melaka. It has been suggested that Srivijaya may have tried to prevent the Cholas from getting direct access to China. The Cholas had sent their first mission to China in 1015. They did not, however, follow up this mission after their victory of 1025. It is also possible that Indian merchant guilds were eager to monopolize trade at the northern end of the Straits. Commerce with China does not seem to have been a major source of income for these guilds. Chinese ceramics found in south India mainly date from the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries;<sup>136</sup> after destroying Srivijaya, Indian traders limited their activities to the northern end of the Straits, making no attempt to keep Srivijaya's heir Malayu from reviving. Just three years later, in 1028, *Sānfóqí* (possibly now Malayu) sent a mission to China.

Later in the century something occurred in Kedah involving the Cholas and Srivijaya, but records of the event are rather muddled. The Perumber inscription issued by Virarajendradeva in 1069–1070 states that “Having conquered Kadaram, (he) was pleased to give (it) (back) to (its) king who worshipped (his) feet . . .”<sup>137</sup> A plausible explanation is that a revolt broke out in Kedah against a ruler installed by the Cholas which the Tamils succeeded in quelling. In 1070 a man named Kulottunga ascended the throne of the Chola kingdom. In Chinese he was called *Di-hua-jia-luo*, probably a transcription of Divakara.

An inscription found in Guangzhou in 1957 states that Divakara had been king of Srivijaya since 1064–1067. Sometime during that period, Divakara, the ruler of *Sanfoqi* (without the suffix *Zhu-nian*) sent a “clansman” to “escort his ships” to Guangzhou. While, there, his clansman saw a Daoist temple in ruins and reported the sad situation to Divakara, who sent an official to supervise the reconstruction of the temple, and donated 500,000 gold cash to buy rice fields to endow it. The project was completed in 1079. In 1070 Divakara had become ruler of the Chola kingdom in south India. This inscription shows that even after Divakara returned to rule the Chola Empire, he was still seen by the Chinese as the ruler of *Sanfoqi*.

*Sānfóqí Zhu-nian guo* (Chola Country of Sanfoqi<sup>138</sup>) sent missions to China in 1077, 1079, 1082, 1088, and 1090. Fukami has argued that this name refers to Kedah, then a province of the Cholas. Thus at least one other place besides Jambi was also called *Sānfóqí* at this time. This is another indication that the Chinese at this time were confused about the relationship between the Cholas and the Straits of Melaka, including Kedah, because of the Chola practice of appointing a crown prince to rule the Tamil-dominated area in the Straits of Melaka.

In 1089–90 the king of Kidara (Kedah) asked the Chola ruler Kulottunga I to grant a new charter to the Buddhist sanctuary built at Nagapattinam in 1006 at the request of the Sailendra ruler Cudamanivarman. Kedah was probably a colony of the Cholas at this time. The charter for this monastery was renewed in 1089–90 by King Kulottunga I of the Chola, who called it Sri Sailendra Cudamanivarmavihara, and issued the charter in the name of the king of Kidara (Kedah), not Srivijaya. Kulottunga may have ruled Kedah as viceroy before returning to India as king.

According to the *Song shi*, in 1077 two emissaries came to China from India: *Zhi-luo-luo* and *Ma-tu-hua-luo*. In the same year *Sānfóqí* also sent two emissaries to China, with the same names as the Chola envoys. This suggests that the Chola envoys were also representing *Sānfóqí*.

Kulottunga's connection with Kedah is mentioned in two sources. The Smaller Tamil Leiden Grant, 1089–1090, says that he gave a village to a Sailendra temple at the request of the king of Kidara.<sup>139</sup> A ruling group called Sailendra is only mentioned in inscriptions from Java and face B of an inscription from Ligor, Thailand. As noted previously, Sailendra also appears in an Indian inscription as the name of the ruler of Kedah. A Tamil poem, *Kalingatupparani*, written around the end of his reign in 1120, refers to Kadaram's destruction by Kulottunga.<sup>140</sup>

Kulottunga seems to have been a high official in Kedah who later ascended the Chola throne.<sup>141</sup> Wolters denied that this happened; he thought that the similarity in names between the king of Srivijaya and the Chola king was a mere coincidence.<sup>142</sup> This hypothesis does not explain the Chinese belief that from 1068 to 1077 the Chola kingdom was a vassal of Srivijaya.<sup>143</sup> A south Indian historian thought that this “can only be explained as the result of a wanton misrepresentation on the part of the envoys of Srivijaya”.<sup>144</sup> This is highly unlikely. There is a much simpler explanation: Kulottunga was a Tamil noble sent to Kedah as viceroy, who later returned to India as king. Hearing that the ruler of Kedah had become king of the Chola, the Chinese may have drawn the mistaken conclusion that the Cholas had been subjugated by Kedah. The practice of sending crown princes to outlying provinces to gain experience before returning to take the throne of the kingdom is very common in history. Kulottunga was probably such a person.

Tamil colonization of the north end of the Straits lasted about a century. The most visible traces of this period include Kedah of Siva sanctuaries in Kedah (particularly Candi Bukit Batu Pahat) and some inscriptions, the most famous of which was carved in Barus in 1088. There is much South Indian influence on Sumatran sculpture during this period, but none in Java.<sup>145</sup> On the Siam-Malay peninsula, “Brahmanical sculpture in Peninsular Siam from the ninth to the eleventh century is dominated by South Indian styles. . . . This intrusion of south Indian style represents a violent discontinuity in the course of Brahmanical sculpture on the peninsula.”<sup>146</sup>

No Tamil inscriptions have been found in Kedah, but two in north Sumatra (Barus and Aceh) were set up in the eleventh century by Tamil trading guilds. Tamil presence in Kedah is demonstrated by works of art (sculpture and temple architecture), indicative of governmental activity rather than commerce. Chola power declined in the twelfth century, and Kedah disappeared from Indian sources.

## Palembang after 1030

Excavations in Palembang in the early 1990s recovered Chinese ceramics from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>147</sup> Thus, Palembang was not cut off from international trade despite the loss of its paramount position in the Sānfóqí mandala.

The island of Bangka, just off the mouth of the Musi River, was important to Srivijaya. Probably the empire drew much of its naval power from the island. Even before Srivijaya appeared in the late seventh century, Bangka was connected to long-distance communication networks, as demonstrated by the evidence that a cult of Visnu was established here as early as the sixth or seventh century. Excavation of a ruined Visnu temple on Bangka revealed five piles of *qingbai* (white) bowls of the twelfth century,

laid on top of five piles of iron *woks* (Chinese frying pans), facing upward, resting on three piles of *woks* facing down. These finds indicate that Chinese porcelain was available in the Palembang environs at this period, and were used in some kind of local ritual connected with a temple which may have been 500 years old at the time.

### Tanah Abang (Bumi Ayu)

The site of Tanah Abang (or Bumi Ayu) is located near the junction of the two rivers which form the Lematang, one of the major tributaries of the Musi. In 1904 a shipment of antiquities from this site reached Batavia, including a lingga, a Brahma statue, and other symbols of Brahmanical religion. In 1930 the archaeologist Bosch found only formless heaps of brick at the site. More recent research has found unusual sculptures associated with brick foundations. One of three mounds seems to have been a stupa, so both Buddhists and followers of Brahmanism may have worshipped here, possibly at different times. Many bricks here bear inscribed characters, including *sri*, dated palaeographically to the early Middle Classic.<sup>148</sup> This coincides more or less with the Tamil invasion. The finds here are quite different from the Tamil-style artifacts found around the same time at the north end of the Straits of Melaka, but it is difficult to escape the conclusion that there was some correlation between the Chola victory and the appearance of a Siva lingga in what was mainly a staunchly Buddhist region.

### KEDAH ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE MIDDLE CLASSIC

No inscriptions of the eleventh or twelfth century exist which would allow us to confirm that a Chola political center or trading guild base was established in Kedah. However, architecture indicates a sudden increase in south Indian cultural influence in the Merbok estuary.

Protohistoric and Early Classic remains in Kedah are located between the Muda River and the south shore of the Merbok estuary.<sup>149</sup> They consist of Buddhist remains and inscriptions. North of the Merbok at the foot of Kedah Peak are remains of the Middle Classic of a different form: Hindu sanctuaries consisting of a room called a *vimana* for a holy object such as a statue or lingga, and an open pavilion, or *mandapam*, in which a statue of Siva's mount, Nandi, was usually placed.<sup>150</sup> This style of architecture is found nowhere else in Southeast Asia except for one site in Padang Lawas, north Sumatra, where a Tamil inscription has been found.<sup>151</sup> One Kedah sanctuary, Candi Bukit Batu Pahat (CBBP) was also provided with a stone conduit for holy water, or *somasutra*. This feature is common to Hindu temples, both ancient and modern, but only one temple in Indonesia (Candi Arjuna, Dieng, Java, built in the early eighth century) has such an appurtenance. CBBP yielded important consecration deposits. The quarry which provided the stone for CBBP can still be clearly seen in the bed of a nearby river.

The Chola kingdom was mainly Hindu. Rajendra Chola was a devotee of Siva. These facts combined with the historical data just summarized make it difficult to doubt that these were shrines for



Siva in the form of a lingga, and his bull Nandi, constructed during the period when Kedah was the probable residence of Tamil viceroys who were in the direct line of succession to the kingship in the Chola realm.

Few discernibly Indian artifacts have been found in the north Merbok zone. One is a bronze statue from sites 21 and 22 along the bank of the Bujang River, which flows into the Merbok from Kedah Peak. It has been tentatively identified as a bodhisattva, but other interpretations are possible.<sup>152</sup> The Bujang River was an important transport route in the Middle Classic. Temples of this period line both sides of the stream. A dense deposit of imported Chinese ceramics from the Middle Classic has been discovered at Pengkalan Bujang (*pengkalan* is a Malay word for wharf, pier). An excavation in 1961 recovered 10,000 sherds of porcelain, plus much greater quantities of stoneware and earthenware, in an area of 9 square meters. Fragments of more than 100 small glass bottles from the Near East were recovered, as well as glass beads and bracelets.<sup>153</sup>

Kedah also had close relations with Borneo and Java. According to chemical analysis, a gold object from a temple ritual deposit in Kedah was made with gold from Borneo.

After the Tamil kingdom declined, Kedah seems to have lost its importance. It was not a major port after the twelfth century. Kedah (now called *Ji-to*) is only mentioned briefly in the *Zhu-fan-zhi* (1225): ships went every year to Malabar from Kedah, Jambi, and Sanfoqi, echoing the triumvirate mentioned by Yijing 500 years previously. Wang Dayuan in the fourteenth century and Ma Guan in the fifteenth century refer to Kedah but give no details.

Cœdès believed that the main commercial center in the northern Straits of Melaka moved from Kedah to Pasai, but Kedah still was politically stronger.<sup>154</sup> An archaeological site of this period may exist near the mouth of the Muda River, but has not been studied.

In the fourteenth century, the Majapahit royal poet Prapanca claimed that *Keda* and *Jere* (Kedah Peak) were territories of Majapahit. Kedah does not play a prominent role in the *Malay Annals*. The king of Kedah came to Melaka in the reign of Sultan Mahmud Syah in order to be confirmed as ruler in his district.<sup>155</sup>

The fame of the Chola invaders lived on long after their empire was gone; the early section of the *Malay Annals* traces the genealogy of the Malay kings to Raja Shulan (Rajendra Chola).

## FOREIGN ENCLAVES IN NORTH SUMATRA

Middle Classic inscriptions from Java mention foreign merchants, but there is no indication that they formed semi-permanent enclaves there until the Late Classic. In Sumatra, however, two sites provide strong evidence that such enclaves existed. Both are on the northern end of Sumatra. Barus on the west coast has evidence of Arabs, Persians, and Indians, while Kota Cina on the northeast coast has evidence of Indians and Chinese. Barus is well-known in historical sources, while Kota Cina has no history. The differences between the two provide an idea of the complexity of the Middle Classic maritime trading network. These two sites provide archaeological evidence of urban settlements of the heterogenetic type.

## Barus

The name Barus has a very long history. Barus appears in some of the versions of Klaudios Ptolemaios' text of the second century CE. The eighth century *Xin Tang Shu* stated that Barus was one of two *kuo* (capitals or kingdoms) of Srivijaya. Barus was known as Fansur or Pancur in Arab, Persian, Armenian, and Hebrew sources. Barus was famous for camphor, an amber-like product of resinous trees used in medicine, perfume, and embalming. A merchant from Fostat died in Barus in the twelfth century.

Inscriptions, coins, and statuary have been found there. An inscription set up by a Tamil merchant guild in 1088 shows that Tamil merchants were beneficiaries of the Chola invasion of the Straits of Melaka in 1025 or 1026. The fact that Barus was not on the list of Srivijaya's vanquished ports is probably significant. Rather than being the kingdom's northern pole as it was described in the eighth century, it may have been more closely associated with India than with Palembang. The inscription of 1088 mentions that ships' captains and "oarsmen" had to make a payment of gold (which was valued according to the price of musk) before they were allowed to sit on a cloth, perhaps a figurative way of saying they could enter the town or engage in trade.

Several areas around Barus were inhabited at different periods. At Lubok Tua, a rampart and trench enclose about 3 hectares. Many remains of habitation and trading activity have been found inside and around the ramparted area.<sup>156</sup> Chinese potsherds here date from the mid-tenth until the early twelfth century.<sup>157</sup> West Asian artifacts include glass from two different regions and time periods: the Persian Gulf (Iran/Iraq), ninth or tenth century, and Egypt/Syria, twelfth century.<sup>158</sup> South India is represented by approximately 1,000 glass beads. Pottery from the Persian Gulf, mainly Siraf, dated mid-ninth to early eleventh centuries, was also found at Lubok Tua.<sup>159</sup> Lubok Tua may have suffered from the rise of the Seljuks, who disrupted trade in the Persian Gulf in the mid-eleventh century. Siraf and Sohar, two great Persian ports, were deserted at this time. The next occupation, at Bukit Hasang, only appeared in the Late Classic period.

The majority of artifacts found at Barus are sherds of locally made pottery. Some were made using a fast potter's wheel, a technique not common in early Southeast Asia. Wheel-made Fine Paste ware is also found in Sumatra, Malaysia, and fourteenth-century Singapore. The ethnolinguistic group known by outsiders as Batak, main inhabitants of the Barus area today, have not been known as expert potters. It has been suggested that the local earthenware might have been imported from Aceh or Java, or made by locals under foreign supervision, but this seems unlikely. Bronze objects, including jewellery, containers, a goose statuette made by the lost wax method, and droplets of bronze indicate that bronze was worked here. Archaeological excavations in the 1990s discovered gold rings and two fragments of stone moulds for ear ornaments. Gold and silver coins were made here. Barus was known in the early sixteenth century as a gold exporter.<sup>160</sup>

Who lived at Lubok Tua? It is possible to imagine, but impossible to prove, that Arabs and Indians created permanent settlements there. This is suggested by the inscription of 1088. That stone must, however, be seen in context. Other Tamil-language inscriptions have been found in Padang Lawas (an area with remains of twelfth- to thirteenth-century brick temples of Vajrayana Buddhism in the north

Sumatran interior), Aceh, and south Thailand. South Indian culture made a strong imprint on the Batak, not only on the west coast, but also on the east.<sup>161</sup>

Guillot is of the opinion that “The fact that very few of the remains can be attributed to the local population proves that Lobu Tua was a sort of foreign enclave in Batak land.”<sup>162</sup> He envisions Barus as a “foreign merchant station, probably controlled by south Indians in alliance with a local prince”, “completely independent of local political power”.<sup>163</sup> The *possibility* of a foreign enclave at Barus certainly can be admitted, but it cannot be said that archaeological evidence is sufficient to prove this claim. Archaeology cannot prove or disprove the presence of a particular ethnic group, or speakers of a particular language, except under very special conditions which are not fulfilled in the case of Barus.

Indian traders may have come in small groups and sojourned for a season or a year before returning to India. No overseas Indian colony or permanent Indian settlement can be incontrovertibly proven to have existed on the basis of archaeology in the absence of textual evidence. No document actually states that natives from any part of South Asia actually resided permanently in Sumatra or the Malay Peninsula. Even if pottery was imported from India, artifacts are not proof of the ethnicity of the people who used them. Chinese porcelain has been used for centuries by Southeast Asians. Local elites sometimes imitated foreign lifestyles. Between 2001 and 2004, a Franco-Indonesian team excavated three more sites in the Barus area. These yielded data on settlement and trade during the Late Classic.

## Kota Cina

The Chola attack may have caused the “fall” of Srivijaya (or disintegration of the mandala), and Indian trading guilds may have been the first major beneficiary of the change of overlord at the northern end of the Straits of Melaka, but Chinese merchants also began to challenge the long-time Malay control of the region’s commerce. The earliest Chinese traders came to Seasia as passengers on foreign ships. By the thirteenth century their sojourning lifestyle led to the formation of Chinese overseas communities. At first the residents of these communities probably visited them for limited periods, but the profitability of remaining in the region for longer periods to take advantage of fluctuations in the prices of commodities soon became apparent. Sometime during the twelfth century, the first overseas Chinese community may have been implanted in the Straits of Melaka.

Zhu Yu, in the early 1100s, described Chinese merchants who mainly dealt in pottery, “the small pieces packed in the larger, till there is not a crevice left”.<sup>164</sup> According to Zhao Rugua in 1225, however, the porcelain trade was still largely in the hands of foreign, especially Arab, merchants (*fanshang*), so the presence of huge amounts of Chinese porcelain at a site neither proves that Chinese brought it nor that they resided there. Until much more archaeology is conducted on sites of the Middle and Late Classic in the Straits of Melaka, the probability that a site was the home of an early overseas Chinese community cannot be estimated.

Kota Cina means “Chinese Stockade” in Malay. The name suggests that a fortified settlement existed there. Communities of local people may have congregated around the stockade to provide goods and

services to Chinese (and south Asians) who may have resided within it. Thus a densely populated settlement with a wide range of occupations diagnostic of a heterogenetic city may have formed here, outside of any mandala. The site's marginal location suggests that its inhabitants avoided areas controlled by established authorities. Buddhist and Hindu stone statues from Sri Lanka and south India have been found at the site, along with a few Sri Lankan coins and Indian and Chinese glass beads. Chinese visitation may have eventually become predominant after the decline of the Cholas; 30 per cent of the ceramics at the site are Chinese. No Indian pottery and very little Persian pottery or glass has been found at the site. Evidence suggestive (but not conclusive) of Chinese presence in addition to pottery includes gold foil scraps with inscribed Chinese characters and hundreds of Chinese coins, some still in boxes and corroded together in sausages, indicating that they were originally tied in strings of uniform numbers to form larger units. Others were scattered randomly among habitation remains. This is the oldest site yet discovered outside of China where Chinese cash was in everyday use.

The modern village of Kota Cina lay at the landward edge of a mangrove swamp in northeast Sumatra when archaeological excavations began in the 1970s.<sup>165</sup> A wide range of materials was recovered: foundations of brick temples, large quantities of Chinese and local ceramics, Chinese and Sri Lankan coins, gold, bronze, iron slag, moulds for making jewellery, bones, shells, and wooden posts which formerly supported stilt houses. Chinese pottery found here dates from the late Northern Song and early Southern Song (between approximately 1080 and 1250).

Early Chinese settlers built fortified settlements to protect themselves. Marco Polo, who spent five months in north Sumatra in 1292, recorded such a practice:

We disembarked from our ships and for fear of these nasty and brutish folk who kill men for food we dug a big trench round our encampment, extending down to the shore of the harbour at either end. On the embankment of the trench we built five wooden towers or forts; and within these fortifications we lived for five months. There was no lack of timber. But the islanders used to trade with us for victuals and the like; for there was a compact between us.<sup>166</sup>

The same practice was still followed over a century later by the early Ming fleets:

Whenever the treasure-ships of the Central Country arrived there, they at once erected a line of stockading, like a city-wall, and set up towers for the watch-drums at four gates; at night they had patrols of police carrying bells; inside, again, they erected a second stockade, like a small city-wall, [within which] they constructed warehouses and granaries; [and] all the money and provisions were stored in them.<sup>167</sup>

The fact that Marco Polo's fleet in 1292 did not stay at an established Chinese community suggests that none existed. Kota Cina was already abandoned by this time.

The Buddhist remains from Kota Cina display no esoteric traits. They appear more closely related to the Theravāda stream of belief which was entering the central part of the Siam-Malay Peninsula around this time from Sri Lanka. This differentiates Kota Cina from the societies which were constructing the major monuments, such as Padang Lawas, Muara Takus, and Jambi, in other parts of Sumatra.

## MALAYU AND MUARA JAMBI

The Batanghari, the second largest river system in Sumatra, after the Musi, is 1,740 kilometers long, of which 1,440 kilometers is navigable.<sup>168</sup> Historical archaeology in the Batanghari drainage begins with the Karang Berahi inscription, one of several stones bearing oaths of loyalty to Srivijaya set up in the late seventh century. Karang Berahi lies in the Sumatran hinterland, near a source of gold. A Tang source says that Malayu, a name associated with Jambi for the next 700 years, sent tribute to China in 644–645. Yijing the Buddhist pilgrim wrote that in 671 Malayu was a *zhou*, or geographical region, where he stopped on his way from Srivijaya to India. On his return in 689 he noted that Malayu had “become Srivijaya”.

The Chola listed *Malaiyūr* as one of Srivijaya’s ports which they conquered in 1025. In the Middle Classic the Batanghari in the province of Jambi was probably the political center of the Sumatran coastal region and offshore islands referred to by Chinese sources as *Sānfōqí*. A major archaeological complex at Muara Jambi is almost certainly the capital of the kingdom.

The name Jambi appeared in Chinese sources as *Zhanbei* in 840. This kingdom sent missions to China in 852 and 871. It may have been the name of the capital of Malayu. By the late eleventh century it had become the main Sumatran port in contact with China under the name *Sānfōqí Zhanbei guo*, meaning Zhanbei country of *Sānfōqí*, “thus noting a composite character of a polity that probably included a number of member states”.<sup>169</sup>

It was long assumed that *Sānfōqí* is but an alternative form of *Shi-li-fo-shih*, Srivijaya, and that therefore the kingdom of the same name existed from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries. Historians now agree that after the Chola raid, “‘Sriwijaya’ may not be the appropriate name of the overlord’s center; epigraphic references to ‘Sriwijaya’ cease with the Chola inscription of 1030–1031.”

No missions from *Sānfōqí* came to China between 1028 and 1077. At first O.W. Wolters<sup>170</sup> thought that the capital simply shifted from Palembang to the Batanghari valley, but this is not likely. The two rivers had been rivals for 400 years. After 1025 Jambi managed to supplant Palembang as the overlord of an east Sumatran mandala. Probably it had become impossible to maintain the mandala’s ability to restrict trade with China and India to a few ports. Tamil merchant guilds had taken control of the north end of the Straits of Melaka. Chinese merchants were beginning to come to Sumatra instead of waiting for Sumatrans to come to them in the guise of tribute bearers.

The change of name to *Sānfōqí* shows that the Chinese realized that political power in the Straits of Melaka was diffuse, replacing the earlier Chinese perception of Srivijaya and Funan as unified bureaucratic states in the Chinese mould. The name *Shi-li-fo-shi* had fallen out of use after 904. There were at least two locations named *Sānfōqí* between 1060 and 1080: one in Kedah called *Sānfōqí Zhu nian* and one in Sumatra called *Sānfōqí Zhanbei*. Divakara, who repaired a Daoist shrine in Guangzhou and endowed it with rice fields, then became ruler of the Chola homeland, probably ruled *Sānfōqí Zhu nian*, that is, Kedah.

Something important happened in South Sumatra in 1079, but sources give conflicting information about it. The *Sòng huìyào jǐgǎo* says a mission came from *Sānfōqí Zhanbei guo*. The *Xù Zīzhì Tōngjiàn Chángbiān* says that “on 26 August and 19 September the emperor rewarded Srivijaya [*Sānfōqí*] with presents but did not reward Jambi [*Zhanbei*]”.<sup>171</sup> Wolters inferred that in 1078–79 Palembang

and Jambi were jostling for overlordship in the region which China called *Sānfóqí*, and compromised by sending a joint mission to China. The Chinese, however, may have decided to distinguish between the envoys of the two kingdoms. In 1082 the Trade Superintendent in Canton reported receiving two letters written in Chinese from the ruler of “*Sānfóqí-Zhanbei*” and his daughter (an interesting and unusual touch), along with camphor and cloth. This record contains no reference to separate envoys from Palembang and Jambi. Perhaps the power struggle of 1079 had been resolved in Jambi’s favor by 1082, and Jambi wished to inform the Chinese of this fact. Jambi sent missions in 1084, 1088,<sup>172</sup> 1090, 1094, and 1095, as if to underscore the transfer of power.<sup>173</sup> Some scholars who persisted in thinking in western “state-oriented” terms thought that the capital of Srivijaya simply moved to Jambi, but it is likely that the old mandala at Palembang was re-centered in Jambi. We do not know whether this was accomplished by warfare or other means.

This diplomatic activity coincides with the appearance of rich archaeological sites in the lower Batanghari. *Sānfóqí* sent more missions to China in 1156, 1176, and 1178. By this time, north China had fallen to the northern nomads. In the same year the *Lingwai Daida* described *Sānfóqí* as the third most prosperous foreign country in the world, after the Arab lands and Java. There was then a break of 200 years before Chinese sources record another mission from *Sānfóqí*.

Before 1157, *Sānfóqí*’s ruler had only been designated as a “chief” by the Chinese court. In 1157 the ruler was given a higher level of recognition as “king”. In 1178 the new ruler, a son of the old king, obtained similar recognition.<sup>174</sup> *Sānfóqí* was also told that its future missions should only go to the port of Quanzhou in Fujian, rather than coming to the capital. Thereafter, we have no further records of missions from Jambi. They may have come, but since they did not visit the capital, they may not have been recorded.

Arab sources of the Middle Classic continued to use the name Zabag or Zābaj for the Straits of Melaka. The geographer Edrisi in 1154 wrote that Chinese had begun to frequent Zabag and its island dependencies because of unrest in China and tyranny and confusion in India. In Zabag they found the laws just and the people well-behaved and business-like. As a result, he says, Zabag was “so heavily populated and so often frequented by foreigners”.<sup>175</sup> There were Arab and Persian merchants in China, but West Asian produce was still rare there. *Sānfóqí* seems to have had much greater access to Near Eastern products than China did. The *Sòng huìyào jǐngǎo* recorded that *Sānfóqí* tribute brought by missions of 1156–57 and 1178 included copious amounts of Arab products as well as Indonesian items.<sup>176</sup> In 1178, for example, *Sānfóqí* gave 189 pieces of glassware to the Song royal court.<sup>177</sup> The shift from Palembang to Jambi had no effect on Sumatran trade with West Asia. The Arabs kept the same name to refer to the mandala of southeast Sumatra.

## WHERE DID ATISA GO?

Yijing depicted Srivijayan Buddhism as almost identical to that of India, but he noted several peculiar Sumatran customs. One was the monks’ use of a cloth 1 to 1.5 meters long, which they carried folded over one shoulder when walking (a similar cloth in Malay is called a *selendang*). He said that



“Whenever Indian Bhikṣus come to the islands, they cannot but smile when they see this custom.”<sup>178</sup> Sumatra was not a passive imitator of Buddhist thought; religious scholars on the island contributed to the development of the religion. Although Yijing spent most of his time in Sumatra at Palembang, Middle Classic Buddhist remains in the Palembang area are limited. This is partly due to modern urbanization. The Jambi area is rich in Middle Classic Buddhist remains. It is possible that when the most famous Buddhist of this period spent 12 years in Sumatra, he lived in Jambi.

According to a sixteenth-century Tibetan history of Buddhism, a monk named Dharmapala, who served as chief abbot of Nalanda in the early seventh century, retired just before Xuanzang arrived. Dharmapala departed for *Suvarṇadvīpa* where he undertook further study, remaining there until he died.<sup>179</sup> He was one of a number of senior Indian monks from Nalanda who went to Suvarṇadvīpa.<sup>180</sup>

In the late tenth century a king of Suvarṇadvīpa found a Buddha image in the ground, whereupon the people reaped a rich harvest and converted to Buddhism. His son made a pilgrimage to Bodhi Gaya where he stayed for seven years during which he was nurtured by a great teacher. The prince changed his name to Dharmakīrti, and eventually returned to Sumatra to teach. Several students went to Suvarṇadvīpa to study with Dharmakīrti, including an Indian monk, Candragharba (986–1054), who was renamed *Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna* when he entered the monkhood, and later received the title Atisa after initiation into an esoteric Buddhist order. In 1012, at age 26, Atisa went to *Śrīvijayanagara*, which he described as being in Malayagiri in *Suvarṇadvīpa*, to study with Dharmakīrti.<sup>181</sup> In 1025, when the Cholas invaded the Straits of Melaka, he returned to Bengal and became head of a monastery there. In 1040 he accepted an invitation to move to Tibet, where he died in 1054.<sup>182</sup> The Tibetan monastery of Reting is believed to contain relics of three people: Atisa, his Tibetan student, and his teacher, “the Guru from Golden Island”.<sup>183</sup>

Atisa translated a work by Dharmakīrti into Tibetan. This is the only known surviving example of Srivijayan literature, and one of the oldest in all of Southeast Asia.<sup>184</sup> The original text was composed in the tenth year of the reign of King Cūḍāmaṇivarmaṇ in *Śrīvijayapura*.<sup>185</sup> Some texts add that he died in Malayagiri or Malaya, a reference to Malaya/Jambi.<sup>186</sup>

## ARCHAEOLOGY OF JAMBI

Indonesian archaeologists have identified 26 Classic sites along the Batanghari and the highlands near Lake Kerinci. Their discoveries include a set of four bronze images of Buddhist deities and evidence of large-scale gold mining. More sites have been recorded along the Batang Tebo, a tributary of the Batang Hari, including ruined brick structures, probably Buddhist temples, and Buddhist statues.<sup>187</sup> By the Late Classic the center of the kingdom moved to the upper Batanghari.

For several decades, archaeological research in the province focused on the site of Muara Jambi, about 25 kilometers downstream from the modern capital of Jambi Province, where 39 candi, or brick temples, have been identified (many more still remain to be excavated),<sup>188</sup> scattered over 5 kilometers on the left bank of the river. Remains including water management facilities, including three pools and nine canals, cover more than 1,000 hectares. A large rectangular pool 120 by 100 meters called “King’s

Pool” suggests that a palace was located there. One hundred meters away is the major temple Candi Gumpung.<sup>189</sup> The density and scale of temple construction and landscape alteration is evidence of the prosperity and political supremacy which Jambi attained after 1025.

The most impressive statue found in Muara Jambi is a Prajnaparamita in a style similar to that of thirteenth-century east Java unearthed in 1978 at Candi Gumpung. Other Buddhist statuary found here and in other nearby sites, including Solok Sipin and Rantaukapastuo, includes 10 Buddha images and seven Avalokitesvaras. Six makara have been found in the lower Batanghari, including two at Candi Gumpung and four at Solok Sipin, one of which bears the date 1064 CE and the word *dharmavira*.

Large quantities of pottery, including local earthenware, Chinese porcelain and stoneware, have been found during restoration of the temples, which began in the 1980s and is still continuing in 2015. Muara Jambi was probably a ceremonial and administrative rather than economic center. Chinese porcelain has been found in several sites between Muara Jambi and the river’s mouths.<sup>190</sup> Probably commercial activity associated with foreign merchants was spatially separated from religious and bureaucratic functions, which has important implications for the social structure of the kingdom.

Muara Jambi, 1,100 hectares, is the largest site in the lower Batanghari. Three sites comprised a second tier, of 50 to 132 hectares: Lambur, Kota Kandis, and Suak Kandis. Two sites belonged to a third tier (12 to 28 hectares). A fourth tier of 13 sites covering less than 1 hectare was also identified. Eight more sites of unknown size have been reported found.<sup>191</sup> Some of the lower-ranking sites also have remains of brick temples, but most of them were identified by ceramics.<sup>192</sup> At Kota Kandis, dense concentrations of imported ceramics and a bronze ceremonial lamp of south Indian origin have been found.

## The economy

No *sima* inscriptions from Sumatra exist to provide information on occupational diversity. Archaeological evidence shows that local coinage was made by the eleventh century. An eleventh-century Arab source mentions that Sribuza had many money-changers. Local coins have been found in Muara Jambi but not in Palembang. Those in Jambi, however, were excavated in ritual deposits and do not prove that coins were used in everyday exchange. Some silver coins have been found in Barus and Bengkulu, but most coins found in Sumatra are made of electrum or gold, which restricted their use to high-value transactions.<sup>193</sup>

## Inscriptions

Few written materials have been discovered in Jambi. Bricks from Candi Gumpung bear incised *kawi* letters of two different types: an earlier form of the ninth or tenth centuries, and a later form datable to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, along with other signs which are probably not letters.<sup>194</sup> Most other remains of writing at Muara Jambi are parts of ritual deposits rather than texts. A plaque with a *ye dharma* mantra “in curiously amputated form . . . extraordinarily corrupt” was found at a small building

in the environs of Candi Tinggi. A gold foil piece found at Candi Gedong bears the word *vajra*.<sup>195</sup> Makaras at the northern gateway to Candi Kedaton are inscribed with a type of writing characteristic of Java from the late tenth or early eleventh century. One has the Sanskrit word *soja*, “viper”; another has an Old Javanese phrase meaning “the gift of master Kusuma”. These two inscriptions may be meant to be read consecutively, to denote that the two statues were donated by Kusuma.<sup>196</sup>

### Candi Gumpung consecration deposits<sup>197</sup>

When Candi Gumpung was reconstructed in the early 1980s, cavities in the base of the temple were found to contain cups of gold, silver, and bronze; small gold plates, some without inscriptions; gold lotus flowers; semi-precious stones; and crushed lead plates. A study of such deposits in Southeast Asia and India<sup>198</sup> has shown that these were deposited as part of rituals carried out at various stages of temple construction. Candi Gumpung has yielded the most complete set of such material. Fragments of lead were described as “ash” in the original site report, probably under the mistaken assumption that these were remains of cremations. The lead is probably the remains of the containers for the deposits.

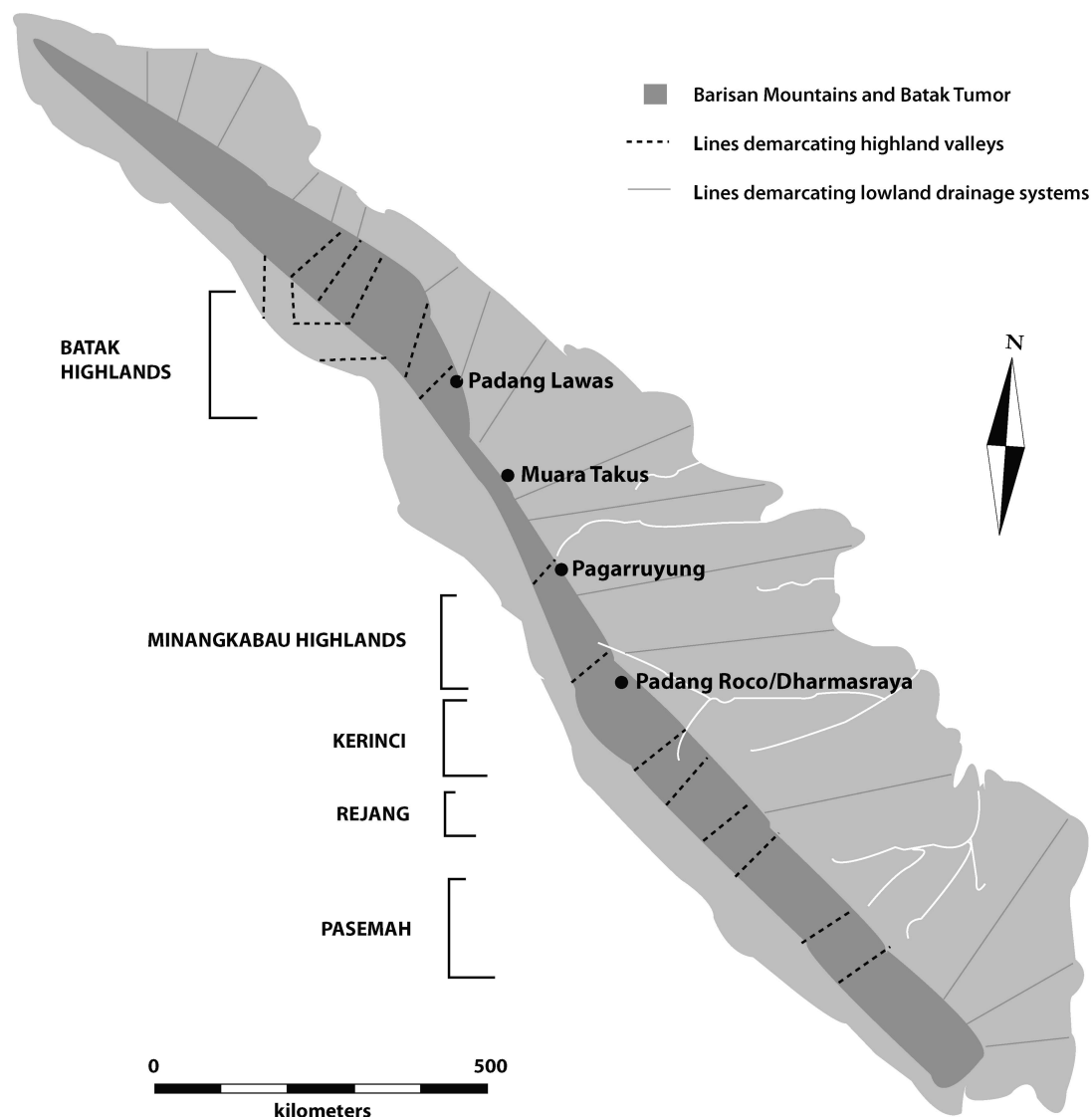
Data from Candi Gumpung led one scholar to infer that the Indonesian version of an important Tantric text was older than the Tibetan version.<sup>199</sup> Woodward uses the term *Mantrayāna* to refer to institutional esoterism, which arose within monasteries. This philosophy provided an image of a semi-divine overlord (*rājādhirāja*) of a circle of vassals (*sāmanta-maṇḍala*) which Sumatran rulers could exploit. The term *sakalamaṇḍala* (“all the maṇḍalas”) in the Sabukingking inscription from Palembang suggests that King Jayanasa manipulated the symbolism of the Vajradhatu for political ends.<sup>200</sup>

### MIDDLE CLASSIC SITES OF THE HINTERLAND: PADANG LAWAS, MUARA TAKUS

Padang Lawas, “Broad Plain” in local language, lies in the hinterland of north Sumatra, south of Lake Toba (Figure 6.14). This area of several hundred square kilometers is located on the eastern side of a pass between the mountain ranges on the west coast of the island. This gap allows dry winds to sweep across the plain from the west coast, producing a savannah-like treeless landscape.<sup>201</sup> The Panai River, which flows from this plain into the Barumun and then the Straits of Melaka, may be connected with the kingdom of Pannei conquered by the Cholas in 1025 and claimed by Majapahit in 1365,<sup>202</sup> but no urban sites have been discovered in the river’s lowland.

In addition to its strategic location on transport routes, camphor, benzoin, and other high-priced forest products from this area were marketed via Aru in the northeastern lowlands in the fifteenth century. Padang Lawas has large gold reserves which are still being exploited. Traditional gold mining was already in progress there by the eighteenth century.<sup>203</sup>

At least 26 elaborate brick shrines for esoteric Buddhism were built here between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Simangambat may have been built in the late ninth century.<sup>204</sup> Three shrines named Biaro Bahal I, II, and III may preserve ancient appellations. *Biaro* is the local pronunciation of *vihāra*,



**Figure 6.14** Sumatran highland centers

“monastery”. Bahal is used in Nepal to refer to two-storied temples of the Vajrayana sect. Rampant lions on Biaro Bahal I are very similar to carvings of the twelfth century found on brick shrines at Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka (Figure 6.15).

Very few architectural remains from this period are known from Java. Padang Lawas shrines share some traits with Early Classic temples in central Java, including a square ground plan with projections; a basement enclosed by a corridor and low balustrade; stairs ending in *makaras*; a three-storied superstructure with square, octagonal, and circular plans; wreaths of small stupas; and a main stupa at the



**Figure 6.15** Bahal I dancer

summit. Elements comparable to later East Java include arrangements of buildings enclosed by brick walls. Statuary and other objects display familiarity with Indian styles, particularly Orissa and Bihar,<sup>205</sup> but the overall character of the architecture and sculpture is quite distinctive.

The earliest dated object from Padang Lawas is a bronze statue of Lokanatha with an inscription in Palaeosumatran script<sup>206</sup> containing the date 1039 and the phrase “the master smith Sūrya manufactured Lord (*bhaṭāra*) Lokanātha. [He expressed his intention by citing scripture:] ‘These roots of what is good

do I share with all beings and turn over to the unsurpassed, perfect enlightenment!’’<sup>207</sup> This is one of the first Seasian works of art signed by the artist. Nine other inscriptions from the region are known at present. The Panai inscription from one of the temples at Padang Lawas in eleventh-century script uses the phrase “the whole of Panai”, though it does not define the term.<sup>208</sup> One very short inscription in Old Malay language and Palaeosumatran script from Tandihet (also known as Si Joreng Belangah) records the date 1179. Griffiths assigned inscriptions on two statues of lions at the site to the twelfth century.

An inscription from Porlak Dolok dated 1261<sup>209</sup> repeats the same text in Palaeosumatran and Tamil scripts and languages. Although the use of Tamil is evidence for connections with south India, there are also good grounds for emphasizing links to Sri Lanka.<sup>210</sup> Two inscriptions from Si Topayan may date from the fourteenth or even fifteenth centuries.<sup>211</sup>

A Franco-Indonesian team began excavations at Padang Lawas in 2006.<sup>212</sup> Estimates for the dates of temples based on stylistic grounds have varied. Bosch<sup>213</sup> assigned them to the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Schnitger<sup>214</sup> and Bernet Kempers<sup>215</sup> placed them in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. Other evidence suggests that they date from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.<sup>216</sup> Imported ceramics found at Si Pamutung yielded evidence that occupation began in the late tenth century, increased in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and then declined until abandonment in the early fourteenth century.<sup>217</sup> At Si Pamutung, 65 per cent of the Chinese ceramics dated to the northern Song (late tenth to early twelfth centuries), the rest to the late Song. Settlements around Si Pamutung were abandoned in the mid- to late thirteenth century. Chinese wares constituted 12 per cent of the ceramic portion of the assemblage from the site; most of the rest were locally produced earthenwares.<sup>218</sup> This is much smaller than the 30 per cent proportion of Chinese ceramics at Kota Cina. Fine Paste Ware, possibly from Pa-O, southern Thailand, was present at the site. About 30 sherds of glazed Near Eastern ceramics were found. These may have come via Barus on the west coast, more than at Kota Cina. Glass was also more common at Si Pamutung than at Kota Cina, but much of the glass at Si Pamutung was found in one area. This pattern was also found in fourteenth-century Singapore. Glass tends to be concentrated in areas of probable high-status habitation. Si Pamutung glassware included sherds very similar to those found at a fourteenth-century site in Singapore.<sup>219</sup> Another connection with Singapore consists of five carved stone pegs, examples of which have also been found at Kota Cina and Kedah.<sup>220</sup>

Architectural motifs from Padang Lawas are Buddhist: stupas, garlands, *chattras*, and *vajra* motifs. Objects found at 10 sites have been identified as *stambhas*,<sup>221</sup> but they are now generally acknowledged to be stupas of southern Bengal style.<sup>222</sup> In addition to Buddhas, statuary from the site includes numerous esoteric deities, including Heruka. Gold plaques with double vajras, Nagari script, and similar objects are no doubt relics of consecration deposits like those at Muara Jambi.<sup>223</sup> The discovery of orange *kendis* very similar to those probably made at Muara Jambi suggests a direct link between these sites.<sup>224</sup> Also very important are three coins of either silver or tin, one with a sandalwood flower stamp. These may well have been lost while in circulation rather than intentionally buried, and are thus unique finds.<sup>225</sup>

Another important inscription was found on the peak of a volcano, Sorik Merapi, at 2140 meters. Three brick structures stood on the peak at the edge of the crater before an eruption destroyed them. Four stone inscriptions found there were written in Old Malay in the twelfth or thirteenth century, and seem to record the gifts of stupas in honor of women.<sup>226</sup>



A complex of brick structures with many similarities to those of Padang Lawas and Muara Jambi are found at Muara Takus, on the upper Kampar River 100 kilometers south of Padang Lawas. The major feature is a large stupa called Candi Mahligai, the date of which is conjectural; estimates range between the eighth and ninth centuries<sup>227</sup> and the twelfth and fourteenth centuries (Figure 6.16).<sup>228</sup> The outer



**Figure 6.16** Candi Mahligai, Muara Takus

layer of the structure envelops an earlier building with a different profile. The stupa has been compared with one in Villagaam, Sri Lanka.<sup>229</sup>

Krom assigned a set of 11 inscribed gold plates found in the site to the twelfth century.<sup>230</sup> De Casparis dated them between 650 and 800. The text seems related to concepts found in Nalanda but exhibit significant differences from them.<sup>231</sup>

Other important consecration deposits found at the site include a gold disc which records the names of Buddhist priests who supervised the construction, and states that the temple was built by Vajradharas. An inscription in Nagari script was found together with fragments of gold leaf and ash inside a lotus-shaped base, supported by a 36-sided base which in turn stands on a 20-sided base. The plate bears engraved vajras and three Nagari letters. A stone with nine Nagari letters and vajras was also found nearby.<sup>232</sup> The nature of the society which supported this complex is still mysterious, as is the location of any population center nearby.

Tanjung Medan is located approximately 75 kilometers northwest of Muara Takus. In 1876 a stupa-form structure still stood here, but in 1930 only brick heaps remained. A gold plate and a *kendi* with neck of gold and rim of silver have been reclaimed from the rubble. The plate bore a mandala of eight bodhisattvas and an inscription of Buddhist formulae in Nagari script, which cannot be older than the twelfth century. Remains of six other temples are spread over 1.8 hectares.<sup>233</sup>

A vibrant network of esoteric Buddhist activity linked much of the north Sumatran hinterland, associated with ports on both the east and west coasts. The ports, however, seem to have followed very different versions of Buddhism and Hinduism.

## BUTUAN, MAIT, AND BRUNEI

Archaeologists working in the Philippines use the term “Iron Age” to refer to the period from 500 BCE to 1500 CE. Within this period, sites are defined as “pre-porcelain” and “porcelain”, which seems to have arrived around 800 CE. As in other parts of Southeast Asia, the “porcelain period” is correlated with increased size and complexity of settlements.

The report of Kang Tai and Qu Ying, envoys to Funan in the third century, refers to “*Dan-lan* islanders” shipping cargoes of iron, and *Beilu*, which exported tin. Trade in metallic ore was active around the South China Sea by 2,000 years ago.<sup>234</sup> At Pila (near Manila) excavations in 1967–68<sup>235</sup> revealed almost 400 burials, divided between an early Iron Age phase and an eleventh- to twelfth-century phase. During the early phase, 400 BCE to 200 CE, glass beads and bracelets were interred with the dead as at other sites in the Philippines, for example, Magsuhot (Negros). The glass shows that the Philippines were connected with the Indian Ocean. Changes in the Pila burials over time, particularly the disappearance of gold jewellery, probably indicate changes in social status systems.<sup>236</sup>

The best-known porcelain-period site in the Philippines is Santa Ana.<sup>237</sup> Excavations revealed remains from the late eleventh through fourteenth centuries.<sup>238</sup> Bolinao, north of Manila, was excavated in 1964 and 1966. Only 24 foreign ceramics were found, and these were said to be of low quality.<sup>239</sup> The burials, however, were rich in gold. Of 52 graves, seven contained gold ornaments. Eight to 10 individuals had gold pegs in their teeth.

Traders came to Guangdong from Mindoro, known to the Chinese as *Mayi* by the tenth century.<sup>240</sup> In the thirteenth century, *Mayi* was a source of gold imported by China (Zhao Rugua). The same commodity was attributed to Sulu in the early fourteenth century (Wang Dayuan).

The most powerful kingdom in the prehistoric Philippines was Butuan in the Agusan River Delta, northeast Mindanao in the eleventh century. It had relations with China, Vietnam, and probably western Indonesia.<sup>241</sup> Butuan became the first Philippine kingdom to establish diplomatic relations with China in 1001, followed by others in 1003, 1007, and 1011. The last mission was sent by Sri Bata Shaja, a semi-Sanskritized title. The next diplomatic mission to China was not sent until 1373, from Luzon.<sup>242</sup>

One of the most spectacular antiquities ever found in the Philippines is a gold statue found in Agusan in 1917. It closely resembles Indic deities, but has no specific iconographic attributes.<sup>243</sup> Several objects in the Locsin Collection show that goldsmiths in the Philippines knew of Hindu and Buddhist artistic conventions, but did not include motifs which would identify them as specific deities.<sup>244</sup> Philippine goldsmiths may have done this intentionally to maintain their ethnic identity.<sup>245</sup>

Covers for eyes, noses, and mouths are said to have been “plentiful” at burial sites in Butuan.<sup>246</sup> Gold face covers for burials were used in the Philippines as recently as 1624.<sup>247</sup> Much evidence of gold working has been found in the Butuan area:<sup>248</sup> hundreds of clay crucibles, and gold both worked and unworked. Two-thirds of the Central Bank Collection of gold comes from northeast Mindanao.<sup>249</sup> Controlled excavations there in 1980 yielded eight burials from three Middle Classic sites. In one of them, a man of high status as indicated by the gold and the Chinese ceramics which accompanied him, had an iron arrow point embedded in one eye socket and another near the neck. Perhaps the man died in a battle for control over the gold resources and other products used to acquire the large quantities of Chinese ceramics found in these burials. The use of iron weaponry indicates that warfare was probably frequent and well-organized.<sup>250</sup>

A script related to that used in Sumatra and Sulawesi was known in the Philippines.<sup>251</sup> Two inscribed items have been discovered in Butuan: an ivory seal bearing the syllables *but wan*, and a silver band with illegible characters,<sup>252</sup> possibly a *dharani*, a magical spell. The Laguna de Bay inscription on a copper plate dated 900 CE was acquired by the National Museum of the Philippines in 1990. The inscription consists of 10 lines in a script known among the Mangyan of Mindoro as Baybayin. The language is similar to Old Malay with a few Sanskrit words, vocabulary common to Tagalog and Old Javanese, and a place name, Medang, found in central Javanese inscriptions at this period. A commander representing a leader named Jayadewa certified that another person named Namwran was acquitted of a debt amounting to almost 650 grams, presumably of gold.<sup>253</sup>

## North Borneo

*Poni* appears in Chinese sources as a kingdom in Borneo. Its ruler, Sri Maharaja, sent a mission in 1082. The ruler’s title is the same as that used by Srivijayan monarchs. Poni represents Brunei, which may have been a part of Srivijaya’s mandala before 1025. A cache of gold jewellery found in the Limbang section of Brunei around 1899 includes eight finger rings, one with incised script, others with Classic motifs such as a conch and a fish, and other objects, including chains, possible ear ornaments, beads,

and probably an amulet container. Probably the hoard was made in Java or Sumatra. It is not possible to say when they were made.<sup>254</sup>

Santubong near the mouth of the Kucing River in Sarawak yielded a number of remains datable to the Middle Classic. One is the foundation of a shrine which contained a consecration deposit. Others are detritus of iron smelting between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Scholars differ on the subject of the type of iron produced: ordinary bar iron for local consumption, or wootz iron in crucibles for export. Santubong reveals much about native smelting industries, now extinct, and their close technological relationship to iron-smithing industries which still survive in Seasia.<sup>255</sup>

## MIDDLE CLASSIC JAVA

At the beginning of the Middle Classic, the center of Javanese civilization was located near Mount Merapi. The last inscription there was written in 919. After 929, inscriptions only appear in east Java. The shift eastward was accompanied by major changes in culture, the most striking of which was the disappearance of the practice of building great works of religious architecture. During the next 350 years, no more than six monuments of modest size (two bathing places, a gateway, and three temples) are found in Java. Palaces and temples were certainly built in east Java during the Middle Classic, but they left very few traces. Only in the Late Classic was there a revival of architecture in permanent materials. Although the transition may not have taken place overnight, the many caches of gold jewellery and coins found in central Java suggests that many people died or left central Java quickly and never returned.

During part of this period, east Java and Bali were politically integrated, but for most of it Java and Bali were divided among several kingdoms. One was located in west Java. In east Java, according to tradition, the eleventh-century King Airlangga divided his kingdom between two sons: one in the Kediri region on the west side of a volcanic cluster, the other east or northeast of that massif. Kediri was the more artistically accomplished, to judge from the literature which has been preserved.

### The period of east Javanese unity: Wawa to Airlangga

Inscriptions give no explanation for the transfer of government to east Java. Several factors were probably responsible, including military threats from Srivijaya,<sup>256</sup> heightened volcanic activity of Mount Merapi,<sup>257</sup> and the growing importance of maritime trade for which the Brantas was better suited than any river or bay in central Java.<sup>258</sup>

The ideal of a unified Javanese kingdom was maintained for about a century after the move east. The location of the capital during this period is unknown, but it may have been in the area of Trowulan in Mojokerto Regency, which became the capital of Majapahit in the late thirteenth century.

East Javanese script of 915 and 921 already displayed some differences from that of central Java. The script called Later Kawi by some epigraphers was used until about 1250. Within this long period several subtypes appeared, one called Kadiri Quadratic Script, which is quite ornamental and abstract. During

two long periods, no inscriptions seem to have been carved in east Java, one from 1059 and 1117, the other from 1219 to 1256. Our knowledge of political events during these periods is quite poor.

### Javanese kings of the tenth century

Balitung reigned in central Java from 899 until about 913. His antecedents may have come from east Java. He was the first to use the name Mataram for central Java. He also may have incorporated east Java into his mandala.<sup>259</sup> The two king lists which have occasioned so much controversy about the kings of ninth-century central Java were composed during his reign<sup>260</sup> (see Chapter 5). He was succeeded by Daksa about 913. Daksa was a great admirer of King Sanjaya from the early eighth century, and tried to institute a new dating system based on the date of Sanjaya's reign, which he thought started in 717, but it did not become popular. After Daksa came Tulodong, who left inscriptions from 919 to 921.

After him came Wawa, who ascended the throne by 927–928, and perhaps somewhat earlier. During his reign all his inscriptions came from east Java, though the center of the island seems to have remained part of his mandala. After him, there are no further references to nobles holding appanages in the Merapi region. Thus, not only had the center of Javanese political activity moved from the center to the east of the island, but also no administration or literate population seems to have remained in the central area.

Later Javanese historiographic tradition ascribes the transfer of government to east Java to Wawa's successor, King Sindok, who left about 20 inscriptions, the last of which appeared in 948. The oldest surviving Javanese texts written on perishable materials date from his reign. One is a version of the *Ramayana*,<sup>261</sup> the other an esoteric Buddhist text entitled *Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan*.<sup>262</sup> One of Sindok's inscriptions recording a *sima* was found at Alas Anten, which later became part of the capital of the Late Classic kingdom of Majapahit. Archaeological survey at Alas Anten in 1993 discovered Tang-period Chinese ceramics.

Then follows a period for which we possess little contemporary information. Sindok's daughter may have succeeded him; she seems to have been a follower of Buddhism. Nothing of her successor is known except his name, Makutavangsavardhana, plus the fact that his daughter Mahendradatta married a Balinese prince, Udayana. They seem to have ruled Bali jointly, issuing inscriptions in both their names from 989 to 1011.

Dharmavangsa Teguh Anantavikrama was king of east Java from around 985 until about 1016. His capital may have been located near Kediri. The oldest surviving Javanese version of the *Mahabharata* was written during his reign. Chinese sources speak of major warfare between his kingdom and Sri-vijaya. It has been suggested that a Sumatran raid possibly connected with competition over the spice trade<sup>263</sup> resulted in his death and the destruction of his kingdom, though no concrete evidence for this has been uncovered. An inscription written in 1041 refers to a *pralaya*, "disaster", around this time. It has also been hypothesized that the Javanese principality of Wurawari was responsible.

Airlangga, "he who has crossed the water", was born around 1000 in Bali. His father was Udayana, the king of Bali, and his mother was the Mahendradatta, the great-granddaughter of King Sindok of Java. At the age of about 16, when he was betrothed to the daughter of King Dharmavangsa Teguh of



east Java, the *pralaya* took place, according to an inscription of 1041 called the Calcutta Stone, found on Mount Penanggungan, partly written in Sanskrit and partly Old Javanese. Both sections tell the same story of Airlangga's struggle and triumph, with different details.<sup>264</sup> The Sanskrit section begins with a list of kings, then records that the empire had fallen in 1016, when the king was killed (and probably many of his officials, since a period of anarchy ensued). Airlangga managed to escape by fleeing to Wonogiri, "Forest Mountain", probably Mount Penanggungan, which was a favourite place for hermits. He probably took refuge with them. About three years later he was invited by commoners and priests to become the raka of Halu, a small district on the northeast coast of Java. Eight years later he began to incorporate more places into his mandala; by age 37 he had reunited the most heavily populated areas of east Java. By virtue of his descent from Udayana he was also able to incorporate Bali. The gods then instructed him to build a hermitage on Mount Pugawat (probably Penanggungan). He abdicated, as was customary in Java, and set up a sacred place which is described in the Old Javanese section.

Airlangga's system of administration was similar to that of Bali: the taxation system in his inscriptions is complex; hermitages had to pay a clothing tax in gold; rice was stored in government warehouses and exchanged for goods; traders could only barter limited amounts of rice.

Airlangga endowed religious institutions belonging to three groups: worshippers of Siva (Mahesvara), Buddha (Sogata), and ascetics (*risi*). A four-fold grouping (*caturdviija*) also appears, including *brahmana*. For the next several hundred years, east Javanese kings followed the practice of patronizing three religious communities. Airlangga was a devotee of Visnu. A famous *kakawin* written during his reign, *Arjunawiwaha*, has been interpreted as an allegory for Airlangga's life. According to one theory, the bathing place of Belahan on Mount Penanggungan was Airlangga's funeral monument, and a statue of Visnu on Garuda now in the site museum at Trowulan is his portrait.

Kahuripan, Airlangga's capital, has not been discovered. He endowed a monastery at Pucangan in the Brantas Delta, and another called *Sriwijayasrama*. It is difficult to understand why he would have chosen this name if Srivijaya had devastated his mother's kingdom. According to one theory, his queen was a princess from Sumatra who had fled to Java after the Chola invasion.

The Wringin Sapta inscription dated 1037 records the construction of a dam. References to royal involvement in water management are rare in Java. This dam was not used for irrigation; its objective was to enable ships to travel up the Brantas River to Hujung Galuh. The villages in a *simas* paid lower taxes in return for maintaining the dam. Airlangga's kingdom became an important part of the international maritime network: inscriptions set up during his reign mention trade with India, Sri Lanka, Champa, Mons, and Khmers.

An older inscription says that the kingdom split in two because of enmity between two princes, who may not have been related. The inscription, associated with a statue of Kertanagara carved in the late thirteenth century, says a wise Buddhist yoga master named Mpu Bharada divided the two kingdoms by means of "magic water". Later sources, including the *Desawarnana* (canto 68, strophe 1), state that Airlangga divided his kingdom between two sons, creating Panjalu (Kediri) and Janggala (Malang).

Dutch archaeologists recorded remains of a stone wall called the *Pinggir Raksa*, the Giant Rim, from Mount Kawi to the south coast. Some believe that this wall marked the boundary between Janggala and



Panjalu. Possibly the old wall ran as far as the Brantas River, and then followed the Dutch residency boundary along a ridge. Thus Janggala would have included Malang and the Brantas Delta. The Guangzhou harbormaster Zhao Rugua in the thirteenth century mentioned a country called *Sukitan*, which may have been Janggala. Thus Janggala would have controlled the ports on the north coast. The location of Janggala's capital is unknown. Two possibilities include Bakong, a village on the Porong River, which may correspond to a place named Bengkung, mentioned in an inscription of Sindok, and Jedong, a site on Mount Penanggungan, where a ruined walled complex with ornate gateways has been discovered.

### Kings of Kediri and Janggala

Only one dated inscription is known from Janggala: it dates from 1060 and deals with irrigation and King Jayantakunggadeva.<sup>265</sup> A copper plate inscription dated mentions King Alanjung, but it is a copy made during the Majapahit period and seems to be very corrupt.<sup>266</sup> A mission arrived in China in 1109; it was probably sent by Janggala, which controlled the Brantas Delta. Vietnamese annals record visits by merchant ships from Java in the mid-twelfth century, but they do not say which kingdom they came from.

Numerous inscriptions from Kediri mention kings: Jayavarsa in 1104; Kamesvara I, 1115 to 1130; Jayabhaya, 1135 to 1157; Sarvvesvara I, 1160; Aryyesvara, 1171; Gandra, 1181; Kamesvara II, 1185; Sarvvesvara II, 1194 to 1200; and Krtajaya, 1216 to 1222. Other than their names and dates, little is known about them.<sup>267</sup> Jayabhaya has been remembered in popular culture because of a series of so-called prophecies which he is supposed to have made, including the rise and fall of the Dutch colonizers. Only two inscriptions by him are known. Several important works of literature, however, were dedicated to him by court poets.

### Literature of the Kediri period

*Kakawin* is a genre of poetry based on *kavya* literature of South Asia using a specific set of meters and conventions, such as depictions of young men and women disporting in gardens. They begin by invoking a specific deity, glorify the current ruler, and modestly deprecate the poet's ability. By the mid-eleventh century the office of "king's poet" existed. The ability to compose *kakawin* could lead to promotion in other offices.

An example of a *kakawin* written during the Kediri period is *Hariwangśa* by Mpu Panuluh, which praises the god Visnu and king Jayabhaya. Visnu incarnates himself as Krisna to kill demons. In his capital, Dvaravati, he finds his divine wife, Sri, incarnated as Rukmini. He sends her a love letter; the poet depicts her as she reads the letter in a garden by the light of a full moon. The poem includes typical Old Javanese passages about love, the beauty of nature, and a battle scene. Panuluh also collaborated with another poet, Mpu Sedah, on a version of the Indian epic *Bharatayuddha* in 1157.<sup>268</sup>

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF THE MIDDLE CLASSIC

### Penanggungan: The holy mountain of east Java

Between the late tenth and late fifteenth centuries at least 81 shrines consisting of stone terraces (probably combined with wooden pavilions) and altars were built on the slopes of Mount Penanggungan by forest-dwelling *risi* and their followers. Several minor peaks surrounding the central cone give the mountain the appearance of Mount Meru, of which Penanggungan was revered as a detached portion. *Tantu Panggelaran*, an Old Javanese text composed in the Late Classic period, states that Mount Meru was moved to Java from India in order to hold Java in place. During the journey some pieces of the mountain fell to earth, forming Mount Pawitra (Penanggungan).

The word *risi*, “sage”, began to appear in inscriptions of Airlangga’s reign; this category probably had already existed much earlier. *Risi* are often depicted as elderly bearded men who underwent extreme austerity and obtained supernatural power, and destructive rage when angered. Even the gods feared them. They live in mountain forests, sometimes alone, sometimes with wives, children, and pupils. *Risis* include Valmiki, author of the *Ramayana*, and Vyasa, author of the *Mahabharata*. The *Romaka Jataka* depicts a Roman *risi* who eats a pigeon, whereas a Buddhist is a pure vegetarian. *Risi* perform the duties of the third and fourth stages of life (*wanasrama* and *sanyasin*, or *bhiksuka*) by exiling themselves to the forest and other isolated places. The forms and functions of *risi* sacred places have not been determined. Research has focused on *mandala*, in the sense of places of religious instruction led by *devaguru*. The *Desavarnana* and *Parthayajna kakawin* mention pupils who are still ensnared by earthly appearances and love for fellow humans. These pupils and their *risi* teachers live in mandalas (also called *kadevaguruan*) in isolated areas. Many, if not all, were Saivites of the *Śaivasiddhānta* sect. Little is known of their teachings. The *risi* meditated to obtain spiritual release by uniting with the Absolute Reality.

One of the ruins around the foot of Penanggungan is Candi Jedong. In 1835 a Dutch explorer, H.J. Domis, found four temples of stone and one of brick here. In 1854, J.F.G. Brumund only found a gateway 4.5 meters tall with an inscribed date equivalent to 924 CE, during Sindok’s reign. The doorway was originally an entrance to a walled courtyard with a bathing place of carved bricks and stone. More gates led to other courtyards, one with a date of 1336.

Two other important bathing places are also found on the lower slope of Mount Penanggungan. One is Candi Jalatunda, discovered by J.W.B. Wardenaar in 1815, consisting of a stone wall 5 meters high and 16.85 meters long, built against the slope of the mountain. Behind the wall is a spring, water from which is channeled through spouts. On top of the wall was a fountain in the form of a lingga encircled by eight smaller linggas. In the same area Wardenaar found a nine-chambered consecration deposit with gold objects. Two inscriptions are carved on the top of the wall. One is a date, 977 CE. The other reads *gempeng*, the meaning of which is unknown.

The spouts discharge water into three stone tanks: one large one in the center and two smaller ones at either side. The spouts, in the shape of a garuda (left) and naga (right) symbolize the *amerta*, or elixir of immortality. More spouts pour water from the tanks into a large, shallow, rectangular pool. The

tanks were decorated with 16 narrative reliefs. Beneath one, depicting a man playing a harp, the name Udayana is carved. In Indian legends, Udayana was a gifted harpist. This is probably a reference to the legendary king of the *Mahabharata* after whom the Javanese king was probably named. The future ruler of Bali named Udayana was 17 years old in 977; he became king in 989. He was the father of Airlangga, who supposedly took refuge on this mountain after the kingdom was destroyed. Whether young Prince Udayana was in some way connected with this choice of theme has led to much speculation.

The stories depicted all include tests of the sincerity of meditating ascetics. Pilgrims on the way to shrines on the mountain probably had to undergo ritual cleansing here. These carvings are significant because they were the third series of reliefs to be carved in Java after Borobudur and Prambanan, and the first in east Java. Their symbolism contains some unique elements, but their style is still three-dimensional, and thus not transitional to the reliefs which began to appear in large numbers in the Late Classic in a two-dimensional style.<sup>269</sup>

The other bathing place stands on the northeast slope of Mount Penanggungan. It bears no date, but archaeologist W.F. Stutterheim interpreted some carvings on the structure as a chronogram equivalent to the year 1049, and hypothesized that it was built as a funerary monument for Airlangga. It was further theorized that one of the most dramatic statues carved in Classic Seasia, now in the Trowulan Site Museum, was taken from this monument. It is made from an unusual reddish stone and depicts Visnu in a meditative posture on his vehicle Garuda, who in contrast is engaged in battle with nagas for the elixir of immortality which he carries under one arm.

Like Jalatunda, Belahan is set against the slope of the mountain. Unlike Jalatunda, Belahan is built of brick, is smaller, and has only one shallow pool. Its main attraction consists of two stone statues which portray Sri and Laksmi, female counterparts of Visnu. The statue of Sri still functions as a conduit for water; in a semi-erotic, semi-symbolic pose, water still pours from her breasts, which she cups with her forearms. Laksmi once also poured water into the pool from a *kendi*. A complex of brick walls and gates once stood lower down the slope, northeast of the pool (Figure 6.17).

Most of the terraced shrines (*punden berundak* in Indonesian) lie at an elevation of 1,000 meters on the western side of the mountain. Above this point the peak is very steep and provides no convenient place to build structures, although one artificial cave named Gua Botol was dug at an elevation of 1,525 meters, probably for meditation and as a place to spend the night protected from the cold wind and damp mist. One of these shrines, Candi Yudha, was decorated with a series of reliefs. They were stolen in the early 1990s and recovered by the antiquities police, but have never been carried back up the mountain. Kendalisodo, named after the mythical palace of Hanuman the monkey god, preserves some reliefs though one illustrating the *Dewaruci* story about Bhima, one of the five Pandawa brothers in the *Mahabharata*, has been stolen. Of those sites which have dates, most belong to the Postclassic.<sup>270</sup>

In the subdistrict of Ngurah, in the Kediri region, a Saivite temple complex may have been constructed in the eleventh or twelfth century. Three statues from the site possibly depict Bhatara Guru, Surya, and Candra. The main sanctuary is 11 meters square and faces west. In front of it are three subsidiary structures facing east. This plan is found in central Java, but not elsewhere in the eastern part of the island. The main image was not recovered. The central subsidiary structure originally



**Figure 6.17** Belahan

contained three statues: a Nandi flanked by Surya and Candra, identical to the placement of statuary at Prambanan.

Mouldings on the temple base resemble the central Java system, but the statues more closely resemble thirteenth-century Singhasari.<sup>271</sup> A similar complex with a large collection of well-preserved statues was discovered in the same subdistrict in about 2010. Its layout is similar to Ngurah, and the statuary is much more complete, with images of Durga Mahisasuramardini, Nandi, Brahma, Candra, Surya, Agastya, Mahakala, Bhatara Guru, and a lingga (Figure 6.18).<sup>272</sup>

## THE ECONOMY OF MIDDLE CLASSIC JAVA

Inscriptions from east Java contain frequent references to taxation of traders and artisans; foreigners; merchants called *banigrāma*, who seem to have been granted tax farms; and ships.<sup>273</sup> However, evidence is insufficient to evaluate the importance of long-distance foreign trade in everyday life and governmental finance relative to the local economy. The shift of the center of government to the Brantas valley may have enabled the government to tax the trade in eastern Indonesian spices and sandalwood more efficiently, but this may also have caused the shippers to look for alternative routes. Internal trade seems

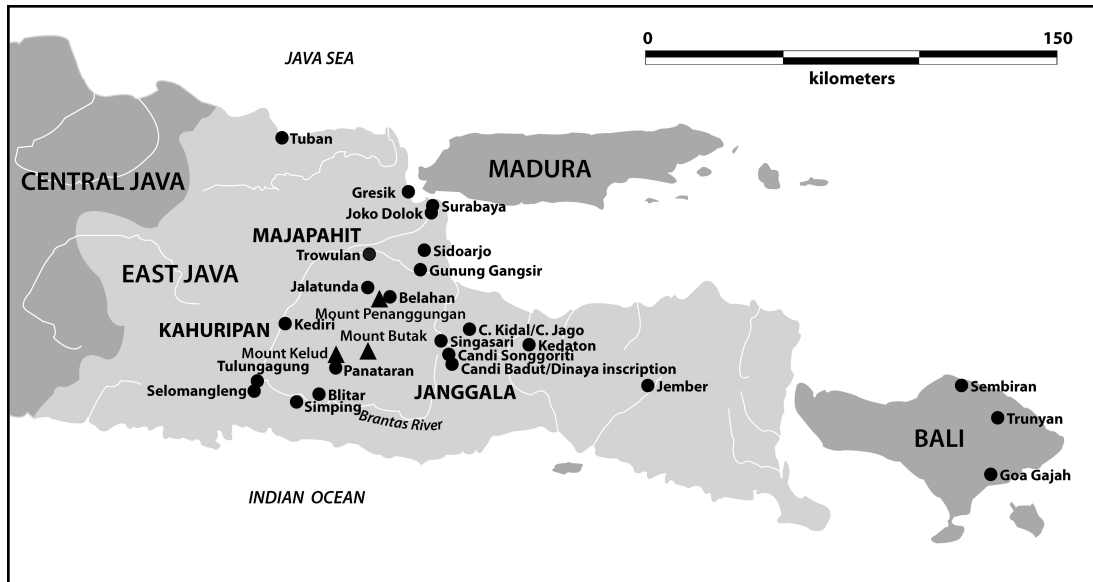


Figure 6.18 Archaeological sites of east Java

to have been very active, but it is difficult to imagine how foreigners who presumably were not very familiar with local language and customs could collect tax efficiently.

The tax system seems to have adopted several practices from Bali. Taxation was developed to a high art. A tax was levied on clothing worn in hermitages, to be paid in gold. This suggests that clothing was bought with gold. It has also been hypothesized on the basis of the Kamalagayan inscription that gold was used for payments to and from religious establishments, silver for the secular economy. The government in Airlangga's time had storehouses for rice which was bartered for goods.<sup>274</sup> The objective of this system is not clear; why did the government want to use rice to barter for other things with traders? Why did they not use the instrument of monetary exchange to do so?

## WEST JAVA DURING THE MIDDLE CLASSIC

In about 932 an inscription with four lines in Old Javanese was carved near Kebon Kopi. This seems to indicate that Hindu culture had survived in west Java, although there are few other archaeological remains in this area between the fifth and tenth centuries. A Srivijayan ruler is said to have re-installed a deposed prince of Sunda in 942.<sup>275</sup>

In 1030 another inscription was erected at Cikatik near Sukabumi, by a man who styled himself ruler of Sunda; this is the oldest known use of the toponym to refer to the western third of Java. This inscription concerns a sacred footprint, reminiscent of fifth-century Purnavarman, and a place where no



one may fish. The language is Javanese, as are the formulas in which titles and curses are expressed, but two forms of script are used: one which resembles script used during the early ninth century, the other resembling late ninth-century script. Possibly Sunda had recently become separate from Srivijaya's mandala. The use of Javanese may represent cultural influence rather than political domination, although the Sundanese ruler may have been a governor appointed by the newly installed king of east Java, Airlangga.<sup>276</sup>

## BALI

A country named *Poli* is said to have sent a mission to China in the early sixth century; this may have been Bali. A later Javanese text, the *Carita Parahyangan*, claims that Sanjaya conquered Bali in the eighth century, but there is no evidence to support this. The first Indian source to mention Bali is a Sanskrit Buddhist text, *Manjusri Mulakalpa*, written sometime before 920; it describes Balinese as barbarians.

Buddhism, Hinduism, and local religion continued to be practiced in Bali in the Middle Classic. At Trunyan, burial by exposure on a special island in a crater lake is still practiced. A shrine for a local deity is mentioned in an inscription there dated 911. This may refer to a 4-meter-high stone statue of "The Great God who is the center of the world" which is still there. Inscriptions describe ceremonies which probably involved a form of ancestor worship.

Inscriptions in Old Balinese begin to appear in 896. The first Balinese king whose name is known, Sri Kesarivarman, appeared in 914 in an inscription from the tourist area of Sanur. This document contains a unique mixture of languages and scripts. The first section is written in Sanskrit language and Javanese Kawi script normally used to write on copperplate, not stone. The second part is in Old Balinese language and Nagari script, which in Java was only used in Buddhist contexts; this inscription is non-Buddhist.

Ugrasena reigned from 915 to 939. After him three kings and two queens ruled until a Balinese prince named Udayana (Dharmodayana Varmadeva) married Mahendradatta (Gunapriyadharmapatni), princess of Java; they seem to have ruled Bali jointly, with inscriptions in both their names from 989 to 1011. Their son Airlangga became an important ruler in east Java after marrying the east Javanese king's daughter. According to inscriptions issued between 1020 and 1025, Bali was ruled by Dharmawangsa Marakatapangkaja, possibly a viceroy. Another ruler called Anak Wungsu, literally "younger son", is mentioned in inscriptions between 1049 and 1077. His relationship with Airlangga, if any, is unknown.

Bali's relations with Java remained close for the next several centuries; at times Bali and east Java were part of the same kingdom. Bali's court was re-organized according to Javanese style, with a council comprising military commanders and representatives of Brahmanism and Buddhism. About 30 very short inscriptions written in Old Balinese during the period before 1022 have been found. After 1022 a major change took place: almost all Balinese inscriptions were written in Old Javanese, on copper rather than stone.

Anak Wungsu ("youngest son") is the abbreviated name of the ruler of Bali from 1050 to 1078. At least 27 inscriptions were issued during his reign. It has been speculated that a statue in a temple on



Mount Panulisan inscribed with the name Bhatari Mandul and the date 1077 may portray his queen, as well as another at Tampaksiring, but these are purely hypotheses.

Gunung Kawi, or “Poet Mountain”, which comprises a complex of meditation clusters and five temple façades carved into volcanic tuff, was probably excavated during his reign. The script used for short inscriptions there is very similar to that used for Anak Wungsu’s inscription dated 1077. It has been further suggested that Anak Wungsu was commemorated at one shrine at Gunung Kawi. The inscriptions imply that nobles “rested”, that is, were commemorated there after their deaths.

## The Balinese economy

Bali’s economy was at least as sophisticated as Java’s at the beginning of the Middle Classic. Balinese debtors could find refuge from their creditors if they could gain entrance to a *sima*; they could pay off their debts in installments, as in Java. Even buffalo, cattle, or goat herders had to pay tax in gold. By the early tenth century, the term *ma*, which had previously been tied to a specific weight of gold, changed in significance to an abstract measure of value. Coins were used in Bali as in Java. A hoard of 126 gold *masa* (2.4 grams) was found in Gianyar in 1929.<sup>277</sup> Silver, however, was sometimes weighed rather than being counted by the piece; thus it was still treated as a commodity. The exchange rate between silver and gold was fixed.

## Sembiran edicts

Six royal edicts issued between the tenth and twelfth centuries (in 922, 952, 975, 1016, 1065, and 1181)<sup>278</sup> contain tax regulations for the village of Julah by kings based somewhere in the hinterland, perhaps near Lake Batur. Julah is depicted in the first inscription as a well-off area with rice fields, buffalo, a fortified post, and an important harbor visited by ships from India and China. The first edict, written in Old Javanese and Old Balinese with many Sanskrit words, depicts a complex society with Brahmanas, nobles, and foreigners. There was a chief in charge of people from northeast India (*juru kling*) and a merchant guild (*baṇigrāma*).<sup>279</sup> The 1181 inscription depicts Julah as part of *Balidwipamandala* (the mandala of Bali Island) with seven *nagara* (probably walled villages). Julah had been ravaged several times by pirate attacks; the king ordered the people to go back and rebuild it (thus explaining the importance of the *kuta*).

The residents of Julah were exempted from some taxes after their port was destroyed by anonymous attackers around 900. They still had to make some compulsory purchases from the ruler, however. The same practice of compulsory exchanges according to which villagers had to provide a certain quantity of goods in return for a fixed quantity of other goods from the ruler is mentioned in Javanese inscriptions, and also seems to have existed in eleventh-century Srivijaya. This type of administered trade continued until the nineteenth century in some parts of Sumatra; subjects had to deliver various items to their rulers for little or no payment.

## Archaeological sites of Middle Classic Bali

Udayana's east Javanese queen, Mahendradatta, received a posthumous title meaning "she who is immortalized in Burwan", possibly a Balinese temple which still exists, Pura Kedharman, where a stone statue of Durga Mahisasuramardini with Javanese Middle Classic traits is found.

Despite strong connections with Java, Balinese art developed a distinctive character which evolved continuously from the Middle Classic until the present. In the earliest period, around the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, Javanese influence was most marked, as exemplified by the Durga and associated statues of the Bodhisattva Amoghapasha, and a Ganesha at Kutri. The nature of the relationship seems to have changed during the course of the eleventh century, however. At Mount Panulisan, a collection of approximately 50 statues stands in a temple on a peak 1,745 meters high. Some bear dates corresponding to 1011, 1074, 1077, and 1254 (or 1257). Similar statues appear in Java during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, suggesting that Bali exerted artistic and religious influence over Java at times, or that the relationship was reciprocal rather than dominated by Java.

The artificial cave of Goa Gajah can be dated by palaeography to the late eleventh century through graffiti on the entrance. A face carved on the cave entrance occupies a position which in Java would be occupied by the *kala* motif, but the style and expression of this image are much more reminiscent of the witch Rangda of modern Balinese dance, or the villain of the Balinese Calon Arang folktale.

## SHIPWRECKS OF THE MIDDLE CLASSIC

The expansion of maritime trade during the Middle Classic is illustrated by two shipwrecks of the tenth century: the *Intan* and the *Nanhan/Cirebon*. Both ships were probably made in Indonesia and were on their way to Java with cargoes of Chinese origin when they sank in the Java Sea.

### The *Intan*

The excavation of the *Intan* in 1997 provided much important data for Seasian archaeology and the history of maritime trade. The vessel carried a huge range of merchandise, including many types never seen before. The ship was not built in China: The wood used was not Chinese, and the ship was held together with dowels rather than nails. The ship did have a trait which suggests Chinese influence: Iron artifacts indicated the existence of wooden bulkheads which had long ago rotted away. Ships built in Thailand adopted this Chinese innovation by the fifteenth century, but this is evidence that bulkheads were already used in early Indonesia. Another piece of evidence which indicates an Indonesian origin consists of 43 scale weights belonging to 23 categories found in the wreck. Although some are also found in India and China, many of them are uniquely Indonesian, and are mentioned in Javanese inscriptions of this period.

The *Intan*'s cargo mainly consisted of Chinese ceramics and metal. In the bottom of the vessel was a heavy load of tin ingots, above which were Chinese ceramics. The *Intan* probably loaded both tin and Chinese ceramics in the same port, supporting the theory that ports in Indonesia accumulated large amounts of imported Chinese merchandise which they re-exported to other areas.<sup>280</sup> The ship carried 136 Chinese coins with an identical inscription: *Chien-heng Chung-bao* for which possible dates range between 917 and 942.

One of the most surprising discoveries was a vast array of miscellaneous bronze items. A Chinese source from this period mentions that "Foreign merchants from *Sanfoqi* bring raw copper and seek to have vessels of it made in Quanzhou. They take them back to their home countries in order to decorate their temples."<sup>281</sup> Many of the objects were indeed made for Buddhist rituals. Some were finials with loose rings that rattled (*khakkhara*), to be fastened to the heads of wooden walking staffs carried by priests.<sup>282</sup> Several tens of *vajra* symbolizing the thunderbolt, weapon of Indra, king of the sacred mountain at the center of the universe, were used by monks in rituals. Small bells found on the *Intan* were also worn by priests. Statues of Buddhist deities and mythical beasts which were used in temples and in the homes of believers, and moulds for making miniature stupas and figures of deities were also recovered.

Large bronze objects in the shape of monster masks with rings in their mouths had never been seen before except in illustrations of them carved on temples such as Lolei at Roluos, Cambodia, where they are false door handles. Other bronze objects on the *Intan* were probably accessories for temple construction. Bronze items for domestic use included Chinese-style mirrors and trays, earrings, oil lamps, chest handles, cauldrons, pot stands, hammer heads, fasteners, mortars, pestles, door hinges, seals, and scrap metal.

The wreck yielded gold objects, including coins of the "sandalwood flower" type; jewellery; and accessories such as a gold handle for an iron object. The jewellery belongs to types known from contemporary Java. Very few gold artifacts have been found in Sumatra, partly because few excavations have been conducted there. The discoveries on the *Intan* and *Maranei* suggest that gold items were made in Sumatra for export to Java. Also in the cargo were 80 silver ingots inscribed with Chinese characters. Silver was sometimes given to Sumatran envoys; a 1079 mission received 517 kilograms.<sup>283</sup>

The *Intan* carried a large quantity of iron items made in China, including bundles of iron bars, blades for machetes, and frying pans. Iron was always avidly sought by the people of insular Seasia. Yijing in the seventh century described how sea nomads in the Nicobar Islands rushed out in canoes when they saw a trading vessel. "[W]hat they are anxious to get is iron only; for a piece of iron as large as two fingers, one gets from the five to ten cocoa-nuts."<sup>284</sup>

The ceramic cargo of the *Intan* may have included 20,000 objects. More than half of them were utilitarian Chinese stoneware containers for more valuable items. Higher-quality items included green and white dishes, bottles, jars, ewers, and bowls. A few containers from Persia were also found on board.<sup>285</sup> Fragments of glass vessels, mainly bottles, are probably from China. Hundreds of glass "eye beads" found on the *Intan* are probably of West Asian manufacture, although it is possible that such beads were made in Palembang.<sup>286</sup>

Seasian commodities on board included Fine Paste Ware bottles and *kendi*, some of which were of the sophisticated shape called *kendi maling*, which can only be filled by turning them upside down.<sup>287</sup>

These were probably made in south Thailand near Satingphra. The *Intan* could have acquired its entire cargo there. The *Intan* sailed soon after east Java had become the new center of Mataram; perhaps the *Intan* was heading for Surabaya or Tuban. The *Intan* clearly depicts the integrated structure of the China/Indonesia/Indian Ocean trade in the Middle Classic. The ship carried items from all three regions.

### The Cirebon (Nanhan) and Karawang

These two wrecks were found off northwest Java, where both were apparently headed. The *Cirebon* (sometimes called *Nanhan*) was an Indonesian-made vessel discovered in 2003. The vessel sank around 970, judging from an inscription on a bowl and coins.<sup>288</sup> The cargo yielded several important insights into Middle Classic maritime trade. One key point is the sheer amount of pottery in the ship; archaeologists registered more than 150,000 items. The weight of the cargo may have exceeded 300 tons. The total number of ceramics on the ship, including broken objects, may have reached half a million items, including 35,000 pieces of Southeast Asian Fine Paste earthenware. At a time when the entire population of Java may have totalled two million people, it is hard to fathom how this cargo would have been absorbed by the market.<sup>289</sup> Another interesting aspect of the cargo is the significant number of items with Islamic associations, including rosary beads and glass items with Arabic script, and moulds for making Islamic medallions. There were also Buddhist bronze objects like those found on the *Intan* (*khakkaras*, *vajras*, a statue of the esoteric deity Tara, a bell with *vajra* handle, etc.), and elaborate gold items, including a gold sheet with an inscription in Kawi script. Tin and lead ingots from West Asia and Afghanistan were also found. The total weight of metal objects on the ship may have reached 40 tons.<sup>290</sup> Other than the larger proportion of items from the western Indian Ocean, the cargo is similar to that of the *Intan*.

New insight was provided by plotting items on the site. Their distribution indicates that the cargo was not dispersed according to lots belonging to individual traders, as is assumed to have been standard practice, but was controlled by a single merchant or authority.<sup>291</sup> Each area of the ship was allocated to one particular type of material. This could also have been the case if merchants on the ship each specialized in one type of commodity, but this was not how maritime trade is described in the ancient sources or how early European observers perceived the system.

The *Karawang* was discovered by fishermen in 2007. Only partial excavation has been conducted. Approximately 40 per cent of the cargo, which is estimated to have included 70,000 ceramics,<sup>292</sup> is believed to remain on the site. No remains of the ship itself have been found. Like the *Cirebon* wreck, the most common artifacts were green-glazed bowls. A few coins of the period 910 to 945 were found on board, providing the approximate date for the wreck. Ceramics recovered up to this time include a number of mallow-flower-shaped bowls and other green-glazed ware typical of the Yue kilns. The cargo also includes Fine Paste Ware pottery from south Thailand, glass bottles, and tin “rods” about 6 centimeters long (possibly a form of currency).<sup>293</sup>

## The Jepara

This wreck lay in deep water off the port of Jepara, central Java. It was salvaged (as opposed to excavated) in 1998. The majority of items recovered were ceramics from Fujian. Metal items included bronze gongs and mirrors, iron frying pans, bowls of tin or pewter, and a stoneware jar containing 3,500 coins (from Sui, Tang, and northern Song; the most recent dates from 1118). The white ware resembles that of Dehua, but production at that site is not known to have begun until the Yuan period. A stone piece of an anchor is a Chinese type, but no remains of the ship itself were observed, and anchors can be used by ships of any origin, so this is insufficient to prove that the ship was Chinese.<sup>294</sup>

## DAI VIET (LY DYNASTY) AND CHAMPA

The demise of the Tang dynasty resulted in a period of competition among local polities in Vietnam between the tenth and eleventh centuries, from which Dai Viet emerged. The most important of the “Twelve Warlords” were Phong near Yunnan comprising Tai-Viet people; Giao in the Red River Delta; the lower delta east and southeast of Giao, which had no special name in texts; Truong on the southern edges of the delta and hills; and Ai, Dien, and Hoan along the coast. Two brothers of the Kieu family controlled different parts of Phong, seven lords divided up Giao, and one lord ruled the lower delta and coastal zone. Truong was home to Dinh Bo Linh who appeared in Tran dynasty texts as the first Vietnamese emperor. The coastal regions of Ai, Dien, and Hoan, which formed the margins of Viet culture, were contested by Champa. Thrown into this fragmented Viet realm in the mid-tenth century were two threatening external groups, Nanzhao to the west and a Tai polity in the northern uplands.<sup>295</sup>

Three kings emerged from this competitive environment to establish the Ly dynasty. By the eleventh century they had successfully fended off Nanzhao, defeated Champa, and quashed the Tai attempt to achieve autonomy. Dai Viet unified Giao and Phong through a mixture of coercion and marriage alliances, and established a core mid-river. The strength of the indigenous elite is partially attributable to relatively weaker China.

The Song dynasty had limited impact on Vietnam compared with the Tang. Song aristocracy comprised a scholar gentry class who did not trust the military and had little experience waging war. Their failure to subjugate Vietnam in 980 is a clear indicator of this inexperience.<sup>296</sup> The Vietnamese elite who emerged in the tenth century, the Dinh and Le families, sent missions to the Song court. Le Hoan was granted the title of vassal in 986, an acknowledgement of his autonomy. The Song elite was comparatively less cosmopolitan and generally less interested in controlling large territory and population, especially those who lived beyond China’s immediate borders.<sup>297</sup>

Toward the end of the eleventh century, Ly Cong Uan, a temple orphan who became the commander of the palace guard,<sup>298</sup> established a new dynasty and assumed the reign title of Ly Thai To (reigned 1009–28). He transferred the capital from Hoa Lu to Dai La and renamed it Thang Long (Ascending Dragon). The Ly dynasty lasted two centuries (1009–1225) and marked the start of the dynastic era in Vietnam.

## Ly kingship

The royal tradition of the Ly dynasty is encapsulated in an early twelfth-century miracle-tale text, *Bao Cuc Truyen* (“Tales of the Extreme Reach of Retribution/Reward”). The lineage of the first three Ly kings to Shi Xie (see Chapter 4) and Cao Bien (see Chapter 5) is replicated in a fourteenth-century work, *Viet Dien U Linh Tap* (“Departed Spirits of the Viet Realm”).<sup>299</sup>

Ly dynasty Dai Viet was governed according to Buddhist ideas, but the kings were tolerant of artistic, cultural, and religious diversity. The Ly pantheon included indigenous deities, Daoist and Confucian philosophers. Charismatic kingship featured prominently. The Ly kings unified temporal and spiritual realms, indigenous belief, and world religions. Their ability to combine all elements and dominions to produce a “healthy, robust spiritual realm” accorded them prestige, status, and legitimacy.<sup>300</sup>

The transfer of the capital to Thang Long was accompanied by the movement of local spirits to new shrines. Ly control did not extend far beyond the immediate area of the capital. It was highly dependent on the loyalty of its royal members, mandarins, and generals to support its leadership and defend outer territories. The Ly system of government has been characterized as similar to “fiefdoms and latifundia”, where peasants worked land which belonged to lords and families to whom the Ly ruler gave the right to extract labour and revenue. Ly kings were obliged to carry out public works such as the construction of irrigation and water works for agriculture. They also developed industries for the extraction of silver, lead, zinc, and tin.

As Buddhist monarchs, the Ly kings were patrons of the sangha. The monarchy’s relationship with the monastic order has been described as symbiotic. However, the kings also conducted ceremonies related to indigenous spirits. For instance, the kings held ceremonies at the Sung Khanh Bao Thien Pagoda in Thang Long, where they received the statue of Phap Van, which was housed in Dau Pagoda in Bac Ninh Province. The Goddess of Clouds was carried in procession to the pagoda in Thang Long, where the kings received the image. Rituals presumably were carried out to pray for good weather. Ly kings continued to conduct rituals dedicated to Brahma and Indra.<sup>301</sup> Shrines were also dedicated to the Trung sisters and other heroes such as the eighth-century Phung Hung. Chinese influence continued in the importance of geomancy and astronomy. The kings’ involvement in other religious activities displayed Ly receptivity to all religions. Buddhism, however, remained the principal governing philosophy.

Buddhist inscriptions also revealed Chinese influence on Viet political institutions. The rulers claimed descent from ancient Chinese dynasties beginning with the Shang and Zhou. High minister Do Anh Vu’s funeral inscription of 1159 compared him to Hou Ji, minister to a legendary emperor Shun; Yi Yin, a Shang dynasty minister; and the Duke of Zhou.<sup>302</sup> The analogy between contemporary and ancient kings is similar to texts from Myanmar such as Shin Sandalinka’s *Maniyadanabon*.

## Buddhism in Ly dynasty Dai Viet

Ly kings supported Buddhist communities throughout Giao. Texts described the renovation and construction of thousands of religious structures. For example, General Ly Thuong Kiet’s stele recorded the



royal family's sponsorship of the construction of big temples.<sup>303</sup> Outside the capital and in the outlying regions, Viet aristocracy funded the construction of religious establishments. Ly kings donated statues and bells, and supported Buddhist monks. By the 1070s a child was able to ascend the Ly throne and fend off a Song attack.

In 1096, Thong Bien, a Buddhist monk, carried out a ritual and placed Thang Long within the larger Buddhist world. In the first quarter of the twelfth century, Ly Nhan Tong (reigned 1072–1127) erected inscriptions in Dai Viet, further strengthening the polity's position in the Buddhist world, including China.<sup>304</sup> He also appointed court officials to manage the wealth accumulated by pagodas.

Ly kings donated land to royal pagodas, which oversaw the management of large estates. A stele from Bao An Pagoda dated 1209 described 126 acres of land donated to monks, three acres set aside for the use of the pagoda keepers, and the remainder used for supporting village festivals and supporting spirits who were previously neglected. *Thien Uyen Tap Anh* describes large numbers of worshippers attending the temples. In 1016, as many as 1,000 persons became Buddhist instructors. The Ly kings encouraged laymen to become monks by granting exemptions from military service and taxation. The large number of conversions demonstrated the success of this policy.

Two significant Buddhist buildings were Dien Huu ("Prayer for Longevity") dedicated to Avalokitesvara in 1049 and Bao Thien ("Karmic Heaven") built in 1057. The pagoda steles provide information on the diversity of people who inhabited the capital at Thang Long and other subsidiary centers, including artisans possessing different skills such as geomancers, carpenters, painters, wall artists, stonecutters, sculptors of stone and wood, bell-casters, potters, weavers, etc. Musicians, dancers, and singers were also mentioned in inscriptions describing ritual ceremonies.<sup>305</sup>

Buddhism stimulated the development of the arts in Dai Viet, including mural painting, but few remains from this period are found in Thang Long. Most structures consisted of perishable materials which were vulnerable to destructive wars. A Linh Xung Pagoda inscription describes murals with Buddhist images and depictions of 16 arhats. A stele in Sung Nghiem Dien Thanh Pagoda describes visual depictions of the laws of karma. Murals are also mentioned in the Vietnamese chronicles.<sup>306</sup>

Other crafts comprised bell-casters, gold and silversmiths, printers, etc. Brief records refer to *bach tac*, or state-organized handicraft units.<sup>307</sup> In 1040 Ly Thai Tong ordered silversmiths to decorate more than 1,000 statues and more than 1,000 paintings of Buddha. Ly kings established libraries and repositories for sutras; important pagodas contained storerooms for woodblocks. Vietnamese annals describe a monk, Tin Hoc, from a family of woodblock printers who printed many sutras.

## Ly art and iconography

Ly dynasty art comprised elements derived from both Buddhist and Chinese sources. An important Chinese symbol in Dai Viet art of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries was the dragon, a creature found in Chinese mythology, but which is paralleled in the *naga*, or serpent, in ancient Seasia. The writhing dragon was a common motif in Ly art. Dragons appeared in architectural fixtures such as stone finials and antefixes, steles, and ceramics. Dragons decorated a round stone plinth from a tower at Ngo

Xa dated 1017 and a tower in Long Doi Sun dated 1121. The latter is a three-dimensional sculpture of a pair of dragons (Figure 6.19).<sup>308</sup>

Buddhist symbols include the Bodhi leaf (*Ficus religiosa*), lotus and water, and Buddha. The Bodhi leaf was often appropriated as a frame for royal motifs, which comprised the dragon symbolizing the king and the phoenix symbolizing the queen. Objects containing all three symbols included terracotta roof end tiles. The combination of all three symbols emphasizes the harmonious and symbiotic relationship between the monarchy and the sangha. The dragon and Bodhi motifs were used in Ly and Tran dynasty art. The lotus was another common Buddhist motif which appeared on stone column supports and the covers of ceramics.

Ly dynasty artisans produced stone sculptures of which very few survive. Three Amitabha Buddha stone statues came from three pagodas: Phat Tich in Thach That; Hoang Kim in Quoc Oai, Hanoi; and Ngo Xa in Nam Dinh. All survive, though they have suffered varying degrees of damage. The Hoang Kim statue is missing its head and hands, but bears an inscription which records that the statue was completed in 1099 and commissioned by the monk Tri Bat. Tri Bat was much influenced by Tantric and Pure Land Buddhism. The Phat Tich Buddha is the most complete. It may have been made during the reign of the third Ly Thanh Tong or king. According to a seventeenth-century inscription, the statue



**Figure 6.19** Pipala leaf roof tile from Thang Long Palace

was gold. The Phat Tich statue may be what is left of the statue after its gold exterior was removed. The statue has slender proportions, an oval head, and slanting eyes, and shows northern Chinese influence.<sup>309</sup>

Other stone sculptures included broken heads of deities, a torso of a Vajrapani, statues of kinnara, and animal figures. A largely intact statue depicts a Diamond General from the Sung Thien Dien Linh tower at the Doi Pagoda. Animal figures adorned the entrance to the Phat Tich Pagoda: five pairs of lions, elephants, horses, rhinoceros, buffaloes, and *su tu*, a mythological composite animal.<sup>310</sup> A crested phoenix carved in relief adorned the side of a bannister at the Lang Pagoda. Motifs carved in low relief included depictions of dancing musicians found at the Phat Tich Pagoda. The motif of pagoda dancers was shared with the art of Champa. Cham influence in Ly dynasty Dai Viet is visible in dancers, music, and art, especially during Ly Thai Tong's reign. He was obsessed with Champa, especially Cham music.

Other surviving Ly art objects include ceramics and metal objects. A distinctive Ly Buddhist motif on ceramics was a lotus petal band moulded on the shoulders and covers of ewers and jars. Ceramic ewers of this period are beautifully decorated either with knobbed covers bearing lotus buds or conch-shell motifs. Spouts are decorated with dragon or makara motifs. Other ceramic vessels comprised stepped stem cups and shallow circular vessels with different glazes, some transparent and others with brown glaze.<sup>311</sup>

Metal artifacts included bronze and gold objects. Five intricately decorated shallow gold dishes found in a grave in Hung Yen Province in 1967 have scalloped rims and multi-lobed cavettos. Four bronze objects referred to as the Four Great Treasures of Dai Viet were melted down during the Ming occupation between 1407 and 1427. Information on the artisans involved in the making of these bronzes has, however, survived.<sup>312</sup>

## The Thang Long Citadel

The Ly dynasty's transfer of the capital to Thang Long resulted in architectural development in what was formerly Dai La, especially the establishment of the Thang Long Citadel. Ly Thai To chose the site because it had been an earlier capital in the Red River Delta amidst land rich for wet rice agriculture. Ly Thai To's respect for tradition was demonstrated in his justification for moving the capital by reference to ancient Chinese rulers who moved capitals and his recognition of the strategic location of Gao Pian's center during the Tang period. Ly Thai To saw Dai La as a place "between Heaven and Earth where the coiling dragon and the crouching tiger lie", and his capital would last 10,000 years. Thang Long remained the capital of Dai Viet through the first three reigns of the Ly dynasty.

The royal city at Thang Long was laid out in the standard pattern: the urban center encompassed the Royal City, which contained the Forbidden City within its walls. The Throne Room Palace was located within a Dragon Courtyard and faced south. The Crown Prince of the Ly dynasty resided in the Eastern Palace outside the city walls.<sup>313</sup> Palaces and offices were constructed of timber, which explains why little of them remain. Can Nguyen Palace where the king held audience was located on Nung Hill. Two other palaces were constructed, one on either side of this palace, and two other palaces behind it, Long An and Long Thuy Palaces, residences of the king. The enlargement and renaming of the palace as Thien An in 1029 is described in the *Dai Viet su ky toan thu*.<sup>314</sup> By 1010, 11 palaces were located in Thang Long.

The Ly kings also fostered Chinese classical studies. This began in the 1070s in buildings outside the Royal City. Institutions included the Temple of Literature (Van Mieu, 1070), Royal Academy (Quoc Tu Giam, 1076) and Han Lam Academy (1086); the first examinations were carried out in 1075.<sup>315</sup>

### **Role of trade in the development of Dai Viet**

The characterization of Dai Viet as “Confucian” and Sinicized has deterred scholars from studying the polity’s international trade relations. In Confucian sociopolitical hierarchy, merchants are ranked lower than the royalty and scholar-gentry. Sino-Vietnamese trade did, however, play an important role in stimulating development of the Ly dynasty, Dai Viet, and Vijaya in Champa in the twelfth century. In fact, Chinese trade may have had an earlier and more direct impact on Vietnam than other Seasian polities. Whitmore argues that trade with Song China brought about “significant cultural changes in Vietnamese society”.<sup>316</sup> He suggests appropriating Bronson’s upriver-downriver model to examine the Red River valley, paralleling the approach of Aung-Thwin and Aung-Thwin in their characterization of the relationship between Ava, upper Myanmar and Bago, lower Myanmar (see “Champa”, Chapter 7). This approach challenges conventional discussions of Vietnamese history, which focus on north-south interactions, and offers an east-west perspective.

During the mid-eleventh century, major economic changes occurred in the core region of Thang Long. The coastal region also experienced economic change around the same time, which some have attributed to international trade facilitated by China. Whitmore believes that Thang Long’s economic development was stimulated by the development of temples. Close to 1,000 temples were built in 1030. Whitmore and Lieberman share Wheatley’s argument that the ceremonial center was a key institution in the development of urban sites in East and Southeast Asia.

Drawing parallels with Angkor and Bagan, Whitmore detects a complementary economic relationship between Thang Long and the coast, which further facilitated the economic development of the central lowlands. He also noted that these economic changes had effects on the highlands where locally bred horses were traded for coastal salt. This complex relationship among the three zones can also be seen in Srivijaya, Champa, and Majapahit. However, while upriver and downriver can be used to describe spatial entities related to one another, one must avoid the anachronistic assumption that an unequal hierarchical relationship always existed between downstream and upstream societies. This symbiotic network facilitated economic and other forms of two-way exchanges and featured significantly in the development of Vietnamese society.

### **Dai Viet’s relations with Champa**

Ly dynasty Dai Viet continued to engage with polities in Champa, which had threatened stability following the fall of the Tang dynasty. The greatly strengthened Ly dynasty carried out two successful expeditions to Vijaya to capture people. An expedition in 1044 to Vijaya returned with 5,000 captives,

trained elephants, gold, jade, and other treasures. The Cham captives settled in Nghe An. To celebrate the victory, the Ly king constructed the Thang Tu Thien Tower in 1057. The Cham prisoners of war lived in Cham-style villages and either became personal servants to the royal elite or laboured for religious establishments. They also contributed to the construction of religious buildings, indicated by thousands of bricks from Ba Dinh which bear Cham script. Another contribution came in the form of Cham music, which so fascinated several Ly kings that a palace was constructed to house captive Cham court dancers. The Ly pantheon of gods included in addition to the Hindu gods Indra and Brahma, a Cham goddess, Po Nagar.<sup>317</sup> The royal cult dedicated to Indra or Thein Vuong continued into the Tran dynasty. Ly Thanh Tong (reigned 1054–1072) sent another expedition in 1069 which resulted in the capture of the Cham territories of Dia Ly, Ma Linh, and Bo Chinh.

By early 1076, the Ly army captured Guangdong and Guangxi; China recognized Dai Viet as an autonomous polity. Dai Viet became An Nam Guo. Even though mid-late eleventh-century Champa had become subordinate to Ly Dai Viet, Champa sent missions to China and was a force to be reckoned with during the Protectorate of Annam period after the fall of the Tang dynasty.

### Middle Classic Champa

The expansion of Champa northwards resulted in conflict with newly independent Dai Viet. A Champa ruler attempted in the 990s to intervene in Vietnamese internal affairs.<sup>318</sup> In the late tenth century, the core of Champa was at Indrapura. Chinese records refer to a Cham mission in the late tenth century which brought tribute comprising medicine, rhinoceros horns, ivory tusks, areca nuts, camphor, textiles, and *jian xiang* (a grade of sandalwood used for incense). The Chinese gave the Cham mission horses, banners, silver swords, silver spears, and bows and arrows in return. Other items were also given, including turtle shells, golden bells, and a bronze incense burner.<sup>319</sup>

By the eleventh century, the major centers of Champa had relocated to the Thu Bon valley and Quang Nam. Inscriptions suggest that two other mandalas existed in Nha Trang and Panduranga. The two Dai Viet invasions of Champa are not recorded in Cham inscriptions which were erected in My Son between 991 and 1088, and another group in Nha Trang and Phan Rang between 1050 and 1064. These focused on Champa's relations with Cambodia, including a sacking of Sambhupura in 1056, and on competition among the southern chiefs.<sup>320</sup> Vickery suggests that the three provinces which were taken by Dai Viet following the 1069 invasion had already been lost to the Vietnamese by the end of the tenth century. Chinese records did not mention these invasions but describe a tribute mission sent by Rudravarman.

Cham inscriptions highlight two mandalas in Thu Bon, with temples and inscriptions in My Son, and another in the south, with temple building and inscriptions in Nha Trang and Panduranga. Aside from conflict with Cambodia and internal rivalry among the southern chiefs, the inscriptions provide some information on power struggles between northern and southern Champa, which suggest that My Son was attempting to incorporate the south into its mandala. The flurry of inscriptions came to a halt toward the end of the eleventh century. Between the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth centuries, few inscriptions were carved, and these provided little information.



Tra Kieu was a flourishing mandala and a capital between the fifth and eleventh centuries. Tra Kieu, like other capitals, was not located on the coast or near the port, contrary to the prediction of the upstream-downstream model. Cham piracy resulted in China's refusal to accept tribute from the Cham court in 1167. The Chinese claimed that the goods were illegally seized from Arab ships. Relations did not improve with the Southern Song court. Champa mandalas at this period suffered from continuous wars with the Khmer.

The mid-twelfth through mid-thirteenth centuries witnessed continuous warfare between Cham polities in Nha Trang-Phan Rang, My Son-Binh Dinh (Vijaya), and Cambodia. The warfare started with the expansion program of Khmer king Suryavarman II (1113–1145/50). Maspero suggested that Khmer failure to capture access to seaports in Vietnam led them to launch attacks on Champa, which they considered weaker. The Khmer were able to subdue Vijaya, but this victory was short-lived. Khmer attacks continued under Jayavarman VII (1182–1220), who formed alliances with some Cham chiefs. Cham inscriptions, on the other hand, describe incursions into Cambodia in the 1170s and claimed a great Cham conquest of Angkor in 1177. Chinese records suggested that serious Cham attacks took place in 1170 and 1177. Vickery, however, dismisses both Cham and Chinese records' claims, and indicates a Jayavarman VII inscription describing a Cham victory sometime between 1166 and 1181 over a Cambodian usurper. Vickery denies that this could have been a victory over Angkor, but did not explain why. He does agree that this Cham victory occurred before Jayavarman VII's final conquest and that it actually aided his reconquest of Cambodia. The Chams, including two princes who accompanied Jayavarman VII to Cambodia in 1182, were Jayavarman's allies. The two princes later ruled Vijaya, presumably as vassals of the Angkor mandala.<sup>321</sup>

There were no inscriptions between the late twelfth century until the 1220s when three inscriptions refer to a 30-year war with Cambodia and the final departure of Cambodians in 1220. These three inscriptions were found in Phan Rang, Nha Trang, and My Son, and suggest that Jayavarman VII was never able to assert full domination over Champa. One inscription refers to an important Cham king, Jaya Paramesvaravarmadeva who ascended the throne in 1226. He left 10 inscriptions dating between 1220 and 1244: two in My Son and Binh Dinh, and eight in Nha Trang and Phan Rang, demonstrating the primacy of the south during this period.

## Cham architecture

The final stage of Cham architecture is represented by the period between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, when the capital was at Vijaya. The architecture of this period is characterized by the continuous appropriation of some older artistic styles and influences from external religious centers. The buildings are generally taller and larger and constructed on higher ground near ports. Artistically, the structures of this period reflect a lack of innovation; most of the buildings possessed few decorations. After the fall of Vijaya, smaller brick buildings continued to be constructed on hills.<sup>322</sup> Schweyer, however, selects a different turning point for the fourth stage of Cham architectural development using the decline of Vijaya as a dividing line between the third and fourth periods. The fourth stage is characterized by smaller



structures and simpler ground plans. It is also represented by a shift from the northern and central part to the south.<sup>323</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The royal city of Thang Long was severely damaged during wars in the early thirteenth century. The city gradually ceased to be important and was dismantled between the 1220s and 1420s as internal conflict and external wars were waged. This also paved the way for the rise of the Tran dynasty.<sup>324</sup>

Between 1278 and 1282, Kublai Khan sent an expedition to Seasia, including Champa. The Mongols captured the Cham capital but conflict continued for three years before the Mongols departed. It has been suggested that the Mongol invasions stimulated trade with the region.<sup>325</sup> The invasions also took place during the transition from the Middle to the Late Classic. In the wake of the invasions, an alliance formed between Champ and Vietnam which involved the betrothal of a Vietnamese princess to the Cham king in 1306.

The fourteenth century witnessed frequent conflict between Dai Viet and Champa, which is described in Vietnamese and Chinese sources, but no Cham inscriptions deal with them. Thirty years of war between Champa and Vietnam between the 1360s and 1390s<sup>326</sup> rarely resulted in the massive loss of life; victors sought to capture people rather than slaughter them.<sup>327</sup> The end of the 30-year war coincided with the rise of a Cham warrior king, Che Bong Nga.

## NOTES

- 1 On the “port of trade” hypothesis, see Leeds 1961; Miksic 2004a; Polanyi et al. 1957.
- 2 Bronson and Wisseman [Christie] 1976.
- 3 Wheatley 1983: figure 22, 426, and 427.
- 4 Miksic 1991.
- 5 Miksic and Soekatno 1995: 156.
- 6 Woodward 2005: 347–348; Skilling 1997.
- 7 Polkinghorne 2007; Giteau 1965: 139–142.
- 8 Miksic 2014a.
- 9 Hirth 1917: 76.
- 10 Groeneveldt 1960: 18.
- 11 Wolters 1983: 52.
- 12 Bielenstein 2005: 65; Groeneveldt 1960: 18, Hirth and Rockhill 1911: 62.
- 13 Luce 1969: Chapter 1, 1985: Chapter 9; Aung-Thwin 1985: 17–22; Aung-Thwin 2002: 37; Lieberman 2003: 90.
- 14 Aung-Thwin and Aung-Thwin 2012: 77–78.
- 15 Lieberman 2003: 90.
- 16 Aung-Thwin and Aung-Thwin 2012: 78.
- 17 Grave and Barbetti 2001.
- 18 Goh 2015: Chapter 4. The word “oecumene” is taken from Greek *oikoumene*, used by Greek authors to designate a civilized world within which inhabitants shared common cultural beliefs and practices. An earlier use

of *oikoumene* is found in Hodgson's (1977) description of a classic Afro-Eurasian *oikoumene* in which Islam played an important role in facilitating economic trade networks through the region.

- 19 Wallerstein 1974–1989.
- 20 Frank 1998; Abu-Lughod 1989; Wong 2000.
- 21 Frank and Gills 1993; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997.
- 22 McNeill 1995: 14–26; Rapp 2000: 570–576; Voll 1994: 213–226.
- 23 For detailed discussions see Goh 2007 and Goh 2015.
- 24 Adshead 2000: 52.
- 25 Adshead 2000: 21.
- 26 Adshead 2000: 29.
- 27 Kala 1960: 204.
- 28 Goh 2007, 2015.
- 29 Berkwitz 2006: 8.
- 30 Aung-Thwin 1979; Aung-Thwin 1985: 144–7; Lieberman 2003: 98–99.
- 31 Wang 1979: 375.
- 32 Mon 1966: 93–95.
- 33 Geiger 1953: 214–215.
- 34 Geiger 1953: 126.
- 35 Robinson 1970.
- 36 Myer 1958: 296.
- 37 Oongsakul 2005: 2.
- 38 Veidlinger 2006.
- 39 Mangrai 1981: 36. Aniruddha “is associated with the establishment of the Cula Sakkaraja in the northern Thai chronicles”.
- 40 Woodward 2003: 185.
- 41 Chutiwongs 1999: 22.
- 42 Woodward 2003: 176. The Hpetleiks are assumed to have been constructed during Anawrahta's reign.
- 43 Chihara 1996: 168.
- 44 Chihara 1996: 176–178.
- 45 Bautze-Picron 2003.
- 46 Miksic 1996; Miksic 2000; Redfield and Singer 1954; see also Fox 1971.
- 47 Miksic 2000: 107.
- 48 Than Tun 1978: 68–9, 158–159.
- 49 Tarup can be variously translated as Chinese or in the context of the thirteenth century as the Yuan-Mongols; Goh 2010.
- 50 See Aung-Thwin 1979: 71–88; Aung-Thwin 1985: 186–92; Lieberman 1980: 753–769.
- 51 Lieberman 2003: 119–21; Bennett 1971: 3–53; Aung-Thwin 2012: Chapters 3–4.
- 52 Evans 2007: 148.
- 53 Sonnemann 2011.
- 54 Lustig and Lustig 2013: 74–75.
- 55 Hendrickson 2007.
- 56 Evans 2010–2011.
- 57 Jacques 1997: 132.
- 58 *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy* (1949–50): 4, cited in Coedès 1968: 322, footnote 26.
- 59 Coedès 1968: 136.
- 60 Hendrickson 2007: 193.
- 61 Hall 1975 says Angkor had a trading class from the tenth century. There is some support for this inference in archaeological finds of ceramics, at least around Angkor. It is too early to draw conclusions from this limited data, however.

- 62 Dumarçay 1998: 36.
- 63 This date is derived from Chinese sources; some doubt remains as to their accuracy.
- 64 Coedès 1968: 163–164.
- 65 Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2007.
- 66 Coedès 1968: 171.
- 67 Hendrickson 2007, 2010.
- 68 Gaucher 2002, 2003, 2004.
- 69 Sharrock 2007; Cunin 2007.
- 70 Lustig and Lustig 2013.
- 71 This section is summarized from Wicks 1992: 196–218.
- 72 Welch 1998: 217.
- 73 Miles 1956.
- 74 Evans 2007: 19.
- 75 Marie-France Dupoizat 1999.
- 76 Heng Piphai 2004: 230; Cremin 2006.
- 77 Nakagawa 2000: 361.
- 78 Aymonier 1901.
- 79 Rooney 1990: 1.
- 80 Groslier 1981: 17.
- 81 Miksic, Chhay, Heng, Chhay 2009; Miksic and Chhay 2010.
- 82 Dumarçay 1973: 8.
- 83 Brown 1977: 33.
- 84 Groslier 1981: 14 and 37, footnote 3.
- 85 Groslier 1981: 18.
- 86 Ea Darith 2007.
- 87 Hendrickson 2008.
- 88 A large amount of literature exists on the functions of the *baray*. Major publications include Fletcher et al. 2006, 2008; Penny et al. 2007; Pottier 2000a; Groslier 1979; Van Liere 1980.
- 89 Jacques 1995: 153.
- 90 Pottier 2000b: 107.
- 91 Groslier 1979.
- 92 Evans 2007: 211.
- 93 Evans 2007.
- 94 Sonnemann 2011.
- 95 K. 542; Coedès 1951: 223; Evans 2007.
- 96 Pottier 1999; Evans 2007: 8.
- 97 Evans 2007: 181.
- 98 Woodward 2004: 352.
- 99 Ea Darith n.d.
- 100 Welch and McNeill 1991: 220; Dumarçay 1982.
- 101 Welch 1998: 24.
- 102 Bronson 1979: 327.
- 103 Welch and McNeill 2004.
- 104 K. 1106; Vickery 1998: 75.
- 105 Talbot and Chutima Janthed 2002.
- 106 Conti 2014: 385.
- 107 Talbot and Chutima Janthed 2002.
- 108 Conti 2014.
- 109 Sharrock 2011: 216.

- 110 Griffiths 2013; Conti 2014.
- 111 O’Naghten 2014.
- 112 Briggs 1951: 238.
- 113 Wheatley 1983: 237.
- 114 Wolters 1958.
- 115 Noonsuk 2014: 58–59.
- 116 Noonsuk 2014: 114–115, 138, 148–49, 156, 180.
- 117 Noonsuk 2014: 198.
- 118 Noonsuk 2014: 190.
- 119 Noonsuk 2014: 160.
- 120 Wheatley 1961: 66, 77.
- 121 Stargardt 2000a: Appendix 3.
- 122 Ho 1991a.
- 123 Miksic and Yap 1992; Stargardt 1972; Noonsuk 2014: 210.
- 124 Wolters 1967: 239, note 87.
- 125 Hirth and Rockhill 1911: 20.
- 126 Salmon 2002: 60–61.
- 127 Salmon 2002: 70, note 52.
- 128 Coedès 1968: 131–132.
- 129 Significantly he is referred to in the Tamil inscription usually called the Larger Leiden Grant dated 1006 as the king of *Kitāram* (Kedah), reflecting the importance of this port from the Indian perspective (Karashima and Subbarayalu 2009: 275). *Śrīvijaya* is mentioned in a Sanskrit inscription of 1015 referring to a number of gifts to a Hindu temple by “an agent of the King of *Śrīvijaya*” (Karashima and Subbarayalu 2009: 277) that probably is related to presents by an agent of the king of *Śrīvishayam* in a Tamil inscription of 1014 or 1015 on the same temple. Another epigraph dated 1019 on the same edifice mentions offerings by an agent for the king of *Kitāram*, who is not directly associated with *Śrīvijaya*.
- 130 Hirth and Rockhill 1911: 135–136.
- 131 Wolters 1975: 4, 9, 34.
- 132 Wolters 1958: 101.
- 133 Seshadri 2009: 125.
- 134 Majumdar 1986: 171–173, footnote 2.
- 135 Wolters 1966, 228, note 22.
- 136 Karashima 2009.
- 137 Majumdar 1986: 181.
- 138 Zhu-nian was the Chinese name for the Chola Empire; Karashima and Sen 2009.
- 139 Majumdar 1986: 182.
- 140 Wolters 1970: 93.
- 141 Coedès 1968: 148.
- 142 Wolters 1966: 228–230.
- 143 Coedès 1968: 148.
- 144 Sastri 1949: 84.
- 145 Lunsingh Scheurleer and Klokke 1988: 36.
- 146 O’Connor 1972: 52.
- 147 Eka A. Putrina Taim 1992.
- 148 Griffiths 2011a: 157.
- 149 Most excavation reports on the Kedah sites date from the 1930s and 1940s. The doctoral dissertation of Nik Hassan Shuhaimi (1984) is the most comprehensive resource for the data from subsequent excavations in the Bujang area.

- 150 Peacock 1980.
- 151 Lamb 1961: 1–9.
- 152 Nik Hassan Shuhaimi and Othman Yatim 1990: 48, 50.
- 153 Lamb 1980. Unfortunately, no complete report of this excavation was published. For a study of some of the ceramics, see Othman bin Mohd. Yatim 1980.
- 154 Coedès 1968: 245, 367, footnote 87.
- 155 C.C. Brown 1970: 130–131.
- 156 Guillot 1998b.
- 157 Dupoizat 1998: 154, 156; 2003.
- 158 Guillot and Sonny Ch. Wibisono 1998; Guillot et al. 2003: 223 ff.
- 159 Perret and Sugeng Riyanto 1998; Guillot et al. 2003: 171–197.
- 160 Tibbetts 1979; Cortesao 1944: 161; João de Barros, cited in Guillot 1998, footnote 15.
- 161 Edwards McKinnon 1987.
- 162 Guillot 1998: 12.
- 163 Guillot 1998: 130.
- 164 Hirth and Rockhill 1911: 31.
- 165 Miksic 1979; Edwards McKinnon 1984.
- 166 Latham 1958: 254.
- 167 Mills 1970: 113.
- 168 Agus Widiatmoko 2009: 2, figure 3.04.
- 169 Fukami 2006: 2 三佛齊 sanfoqi.
- 170 Wolters 1966.
- 171 Wolters 1966: 232.
- 172 We do not know whether this mission came from Jambi or Palembang; Wolters 1966: 225, note 4.
- 173 Wolters 1966: 235, 1983: 60. Chinese sources disagree on the dates of some missions; the *Sòng Shǐ* mentions one in 1083, but other sources give different dates: 1084, 1090, 1091–1092; Wolters 1966: 236.
- 174 Wolters 1983: 60–61.
- 175 Ferrand 1922: 66.
- 176 Wolters 1966: 234, note 62, 1983: 61.
- 177 Wong 2010: Chapter 6.
- 178 Takakusu 1896: 111.
- 179 Schoterman 1986: 6.
- 180 Kumar 2008: 185.
- 181 Skilling 1997: 187.
- 182 Schoterman 1986: 14–15.
- 183 Schoterman 1986: 28–29.
- 184 Skilling 1997.
- 185 Or Śrīvijayanagara; “Tibetan *grong* can stand for *nagara* as well as *pura* of Suvarṇadvīpa.” Skilling 1997: 194, footnote 12.
- 186 Skilling 1997: 193, footnote 8.
- 187 Unpublished reports, Suaka Peninggalan Sejarah dan Purbakala Propinsi Jambi, Sumatera Selatan dan Bengkulu.
- 188 M. Nazir 1980/1981: 23.
- 189 Agus Widiatmoko 2009; Retno Purwanti 2009.
- 190 Edwards McKinnon 1982a, 1982b, 1992; Abu Ridho 1992, 1995; Tim Penelitian Arkeologi Klasik (TPAK) 1996/97. A survey of the lower Batanghari in 2005 sponsored by Orchard Marine Pte Ltd explored both banks of the Batang Hari, its immediate floodplain, and the Batang Kumpeh, a tributary of the Batanghari.
- 191 Shah Alam and Cowan 2006.

- 192 Listiyani 2008.
- 193 Wicks 1992: 232.
- 194 Boechari 1985: 238; Griffiths 2011.
- 195 Griffiths 2011.
- 196 Griffiths 2012: 204–205.
- 197 Boechari 1985; Satyawati Suleiman 1982.
- 198 Ślaczka 2006, 2007.
- 199 Nihom 1998: 249.
- 200 Woodward 2004: 330, 353; cf. Kulke 1993.
- 201 Perret 2014: 296; however, adduces information to suggest that this situation may not have existed in the eighteenth century.
- 202 Wolters 1967: 193.
- 203 Perret 2014 II: 286–290.
- 204 Perret 2014: 337.
- 205 Bautze-Picron 2014.
- 206 Griffiths 2014: 213 advocates the use of this term for the inscriptions of Padang Lawas and others of the Middle and Late Classic periods when Sumatran script becomes distinct from that of Java.
- 207 Griffiths 2014: 218.
- 208 Griffiths 2014: 215.
- 209 Griffiths 2014: 219, revising the date by Bosch 1930: 147.
- 210 Miksic 2004b: 207; Schnitger 1936: 6.
- 211 Griffiths 2014: 226–228.
- 212 Perret et al. 2007.
- 213 Bosch 1930: 147.
- 214 Schnitger 1936.
- 215 Bernet Kempers 1959: 75–76.
- 216 Miksic 2004a: 207.
- 217 Perret et al. 2007: 70; Dupoizat 2014.
- 218 Desbat 2014: 193.
- 219 Specifically plate 19 shards 15, 16, 18; plate 10 shards 5, 14; plate 12; bangles; beads 5a, 5b, 5c (coiled); yellow doughnut beads 7; blue melon bead 8; Perret and Heddy Surachman 2014a.
- 220 Perret, Surachman and Dayat Hidayat 2014: 445–447.
- 221 Perret et al. 2007: 67.
- 222 Ślaczka 2006 and Bautze-Picron 2014.
- 223 Perret et al. 2007: 54–55; Ślaczka 2006: 308; Ijzerman 1891: 59; Griffiths 2014.
- 224 Perret et al. 2007: 65; Desbat 2014.
- 225 Perret and Heddy Surachman 2014b.
- 226 Griffiths 2014: 234.
- 227 Krom 1931: 133.
- 228 Bernet Kempers 1959: 69.
- 229 Groeneveldt 1880: 219.
- 230 Krom 1931: 149.
- 231 de Casparis 1956: 48.
- 232 Ślaczka 2006: 308.
- 233 Bosch 1930: 133; Schnitger 1937: 14.
- 234 Harrison and O'Connor 1969: II, 307.
- 235 Tenazas 1977.
- 236 Langrick 1985: 161.



- 237 Locsin and Locsin 1967.
- 238 Fox and Legaspi 1977.
- 239 Legaspi 1974: 6.
- 240 Scott 1989: 17–18.
- 241 Cembrano 1989.
- 242 Scott 1984: 66–67; 1989: 6; Wolters 1983: 59, note 46.
- 243 Francisco 1963.
- 244 Miksic 2011c.
- 245 Hodder 1982.
- 246 Legarda 1978.
- 247 Hontiveros 2004: 17, citing Fray Luis de Jesus, “History of the Recollect missions in the Philippines (1624)”; O’Connor 1971.
- 248 Ronquillo 1987; Report on the Third Intra-Asean Archeological Excavation and Conservation 1986.
- 249 Hontiveros 2004: 16.
- 250 Peterson 1981.
- 251 Francisco 1973.
- 252 Hontiveros 2004: 28, 36.
- 253 Postma 1992.
- 254 Harrisson 1969; Miksic 2011b: 89. A stone Ganesa statue has also been reportedly found at this site.
- 255 Dunham 1992: 215–251; Harrisson and O’Connor 1969; Christie 1990b; Christie and King 1988.
- 256 de Casparis 1958b: 7–9.
- 257 Newhall et al. 2000.
- 258 Barrett-Jones 1984: 6–7; Christie 1998c, 1999.
- 259 Coedès 1968: 127.
- 260 Liebner 2014: 78–80.
- 261 Zoetmulder 1974: 217–233.
- 262 De Jong 1974.
- 263 Manguin 1996: 82.
- 264 Kern 1917.
- 265 Coedès 1968: 119.
- 266 Krom 1931: 282.
- 267 Krom 1931: 282–301 and Table 1.
- 268 Zoetmulder 1974: 250–263.
- 269 Krom 1923: II, 35–39; Bosch 1961; Kinney et al. 2003: 50–61; Fontein 1990: 148–149.
- 270 Van Romondt 1951.
- 271 Fontein 1990: 152–153.
- 272 Aris Sovyani, personal communication.
- 273 Barret Jones 1984: 6–7; Christie 1998c; 1999.
- 274 Wicks 1992: 282–283.
- 275 Bosch 1941a; Coedès 1968: 128.
- 276 Damais 1949.
- 277 Wicks 1992: 279.
- 278 I Wayan Ardika 1991; I Ketut Setiawan 2008; I Wayan Ardika and Ni Luh Sutjiati Beratha 2008.
- 279 Karashima 2009: 136 describes the *Manigramam* which merged with *Anjuvannam* in the twelfth century, which had south Indian, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian members.
- 280 Flecker 2002: figure 7.3, p. 123.
- 281 Schottenhammer 2001: 106.
- 282 Miksic and Soekatno 1995: figure 38, p. 143.

- 283 Wong 1979: 16.  
 284 Takakusu 1896: xxx.  
 285 Flecker 2002: 118.  
 286 Flecker 2002: 79.  
 287 Eng-Lee 1984: p. 10, figures 3a-3d.  
 288 Liebner 2010: 35. The base of a bowl is inscribed *xu ji shao wu chen*, signifying that the bowl was fired in the Xu kiln in 968. Probably the bowl was loaded onto the ill-fated ship within a year or two of its manufacture.  
 289 Bambang Budi Utomo 2008: 35, 49–52; Liebner 2010: v, 33.  
 290 Liebner 2014: 201.  
 291 Liebner 2010: 44; Liebner 2014.  
 292 Liebner 2014: 304.  
 293 Liebner 2014: 200, 304.  
 294 Atma Djuana and Edwards McKinnon 2005.  
 295 Taylor 1983b: 46–62; Taylor 1983a: 274–5; Whitmore 2006: 105–106.  
 296 Taylor 2013: 47–48.  
 297 Taylor 2013: 50.  
 298 Nguyen-Long 2013: 15.  
 299 Whitmore 2013: 4.  
 300 Nguyen-Long 2013: 22.  
 301 Taylor 1976: 175–81; Whitmore 2006: 107.  
 302 Whitmore 2013: 4.  
 303 Nguyen-Long 2013: 24.  
 304 Whitmore 2013: 4; Whitmore 2011: 112–18; Nguyễn 1997: 127–30, 225–227.  
 305 Nguyen-Long 2013: 25.  
 306 Nguyen-Long 2013: 25.  
 307 Nguyen-Long 2013: 25.  
 308 Nguyen-Long 2013: 28.  
 309 Nguyen-Long 2013: 32.  
 310 Nguyen-Long 2013: 37.  
 311 Nguyen-Long 2013: 41.  
 312 Sun 2006: 85; Nguyen-Long 2013: 41–42.  
 313 Whitmore 2013: 5.  
 314 Nguyen-Long 2013: 23.  
 315 Whitmore 2013: 5.  
 316 Whitmore 2006: 103; Whitmore 2013: 3.  
 317 Nguyen-Long 2013: 21–23.  
 318 Vickery 2009: 50; Maspero 1928: 122; Taylor 1983a: 280.  
 319 Tingley 2009: 9.  
 320 Vickery 2009: 51.  
 321 Vickery 2009: 53–54.  
 322 Tran 2009: 178–179.  
 323 Schweyer 2011: 73.  
 324 Whitmore 2013: 6.  
 325 Tingley 2009: 10.  
 326 Vickery 2009: 56.  
 327 Tingley 2009: 10.

# 7

## LATE CLASSIC

1200 to 1400 CE

The beginning of the Late Classic period coincides with the last flourish of Angkor civilization. Jayavarman VII may have ruled until about 1219, but the practice of recording events on stone in Angkor was declining and we have no written proof of this. After Jayavarman VII, Angkor's empire began to shrink. No more major temple complexes were built. Brahmanism may have temporarily returned to royal favour, but by the end of the Late Classic the country's population was solidly Buddhist of a form which paid relatively little attention to esoteric practices. A similar fate befell Bagan in Myanmar; although Buddhism remained strong, the habit of building hundreds of brick structures sank into oblivion.

Central Thailand assumed much greater importance than before. A number of powerful and culturally influential kingdoms arose, first in the north, then gradually moving down the Chao Phraya valley to its delta. The two best known were Sukhothai and Ayutthaya. By the end of the Late Classic, the central Thais had become the overlords of the former Khmer mandala in central mainland Southeast Asia, including the Siam-Malay Peninsula.

In Sumatra, the kingdom of Malayu rose to pre-eminence among the mandalas of the Straits of Melaka, though the north coast of Aceh experienced a cultural revolution inspired by the West: its rulers converted to Islam. By the end of the Late Classic, the 1,000-year-old Buddhist culture of the lowlands had shrunk to a marginal role. The last Sumatran king to espouse esoteric Buddhism disappeared from history in 1374. The ruler of the first kingdom to form in the Postclassic Straits of Melaka (at Melaka) almost immediately converted to Islam.

In Java the process of Islamization took longer. The non-Muslim rulers of the foremost claimant to the status of overlord of a vast mandala, Majapahit, continued to send embassies to China until 1470. Majapahit was the last major example of elaborate Classic culture to form and prosper. Its decline after 1400 and the rise of Muslim Melaka serve as a rationale for ending the Classic period at the somewhat arbitrary date of 1400.

As Classic Southeast Asian culture disintegrated, cities and maritime trade grew. Large, permanent communities of overseas Chinese began to form. In the 1330s they were still scarce, but by 1400 there were several Chinese colonies with 5,000 people or more. The policies of the Yuan dynasty which encouraged trade fostered these developments, but when the Yuan were replaced by the Ming, a Chinese dynasty, in 1368, Chinese interaction with Seasia declined rapidly as a result of the instatement of harsh restrictions on commerce and contact with foreigners. This did not, however, have any appreciable effect on the Seasian economy. This indicates that China was not the main engine of the region's trade. Commerce within the region as well as with the Indian Ocean was quite sufficient to maintain healthy cities and courts.

Kota Cina in north Sumatra may have been an exception to the generalization that population in most early Seasian urban sites was dispersed and of low density. Several Southeast Asian cities of the Late Classic which we can detect from archaeological remains, including Kota Cina and Temasik, had high-density habitation. These sites may have been examples of foreign enclaves or colonies, but definitive proof is very difficult to establish.

## URBAN LIFE IN CHINA DURING THE LATE CLASSIC

Almost no written information on Late Classic Seasian cities survives. Kota Cina may have appeared in the Middle Classic, but it may have been an exception to the normal type of Seasian settlement of that period. If Kota Cina could be identified as replicating a Chinese settlement pattern which was alien to Seasia, then this would help us to evaluate the impact of early Chinese immigration on Southeast Asian urbanization.

Unfortunately, little research has been done on the archaeology of Chinese cities of this period. The thirteenth-century capital of Hangzhou had a population of more than one million, but:

. . . archaeological documents of the Sung era are rare, and not particularly revealing. Apart from the ceramics, the production of which was of great importance during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and of which countless specimens survive, nothing remains but a few small objects such as women's ornaments, glass cups, lacquer boxes or vases, pillows in painted *faience*, copper coins. . . . Not a single architectural monument has survived, due to the fragile and perishable nature of the materials used in Chinese building.<sup>1</sup>

Much of our knowledge of life in Chinese cities of the Late Classic comes from literary sources and paintings.

Hangzhou was unique in China in the thirteenth century because no agricultural land existed inside the city wall. Other Chinese cities apparently resembled those of Seasia which the first European visitors encountered in the sixteenth century: gardens and orchards were so common that it was difficult to see the houses. The type of structure now called the "shophouse" in Seasia, consisting of buildings with shops and work places on the ground floor and dwellings on the upper stories, first developed in

Hangzhou at about this time. Land for expansion there was limited. As the North African Muslim traveler ibn Battuta wrote in the mid-fourteenth century in reference to the port of Quanzhou, which was one of China's largest cities of this period, "In this, as in every other city of China, every inhabitant has a garden, a field, and his house in the middle of it. . . . It is for this reason that the cities of China are extensive."<sup>2</sup> Thus if overseas Chinese did set up colonies in Seasia, their physical form might not have diverged significantly from the pattern of settlement which already existed there.

Late Classic cities do not support Wheatley's theory that "ceremonial centers", that is, temples and their staff, formed the nuclei to which population gravitated.<sup>3</sup> Nor is there any evidence that forts or markets were the core of Seasian urbanization during the Late Classic. Different factors seem to have been at work in different areas. In Java, Sumatra, and Thailand, some cities formed by the agglomeration of traditional neighbourhoods around nobles who protected their adherents, who in return performed various tasks for them.<sup>4</sup> In Vietnam, cities may have formed around places where artisans worked.

In Vietnamese, *Phuong* means guild, a professional association, but in the territorial sense, it means an urban area, usually rectangular in shape, which is inhabited by people of the same origins or working in the same trade. *Pho* means street. But if placed together, *Pho Phuong* means an urban area in general. Today, a *Phuong* remains the basic administrative unit in urban areas, but is larger than previously, with a population of 2,000 to 10,000.<sup>5</sup>

## MONEY IN THE LATE CLASSIC

Chinese colonists may not have directly influenced the form of Late Classic cities, but Chinese technology did make a major impact in one important facet of life: the production of coins. Southeast Asia's economy had always been hindered by the lack of a simple everyday means of making exchanges. Coins existed, but they were made of gold and silver and not suitable for small transactions. In China, copper coins had existed since the Han dynasty, but China's economy only became monetized during the Song dynasty, thus during the Middle Classic period.

During the Tang period, coins in China were mainly used for paying tax<sup>6</sup> but as late as 749 the Chinese government collected only 4 per cent of its taxes in the form of money. By 1065 the figure had risen to more than 50 per cent. Fifty years later the Chinese Empire's revenue from maritime trade contributed 20 per cent of the empire's revenue.<sup>7</sup>

In the Middle Classic, huge quantities of Chinese coins were shipped to Southeast Asia. Many of them may have been melted down to make other items, but in Kota Cina Chinese coins were scattered throughout the site; a box with coins still tied together with string was discovered. This is concrete evidence that the coins were used for everyday exchanges. This outward flow of Chinese currency was so great that it created a shortage of coinage in China (ironically reproducing the situation which caused the Roman emperor Vespasian so much vexation in the first century). In 1074 an official named Zhang Fangping complained that foreign ships leaving China carried away so many coins that "the currency was drained off like the waters of the sea into the wei-lu" ["rear gate"].<sup>8</sup> The superintendent of foreign trade was supposed to inspect outgoing ships to make sure that they did not carry away forbidden items,

including coins and other bronze objects, and gold and silver, as well as other strategic items such as horses, weapons, and books, but it seems that this regulation was not strictly enforced.<sup>9</sup>

In 1222 China passed a law making it illegal to buy foreign goods with money. Instead Chinese had to barter local products such as silk, lacquer, and porcelain for imports. This regulation created a great incentive to increase porcelain production. Huge kiln complexes were built in parts of Guangdong with access to the South Sea. Chinese traders rented space on ships and slept on their cargo, much of which consisted of pottery.<sup>10</sup> Seasian demand stimulated the development of the ceramic industry of southeast China. Still, coins continued to be smuggled out of China. In 1248 an official “attributed the drain of cash out of China to the extravagance of its people in purchasing such luxuries as perfumes, ivory, and rhinoceros horns, and to the sea-trade generally”.<sup>11</sup>

By 1300, Chinese coins were adopted as the standard currency of both everyday life and the official economy in the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit. The Chinese had developed a means of mass-producing coins, which made it possible to use them to represent low values, leading to much more efficient transactions. In the Postclassic, some Islamic kingdoms such as Melaka and Banten began to mint low-value coins on the Chinese model, with square holes in the center so that they could be tied together to form larger units.

In late thirteenth-century Cambodia, a member of a Chinese ambassador’s team, Zhou Daguan, wrote a detailed report, which has been preserved, on the situation in Angkor. He described markets where women were the main participants, and Chinese coins were used together with rice to pay for small purchases. Cloth was used for larger transactions, while un-coined gold and silver was used in the largest ones.

## EARLY CHINESE MARITIME GUIDEBOOKS

Two Chinese descriptions of foreign trade in Seasia during the Late Classic have been preserved. The first was written in 1225 by Zhao Rugua, commissioner of foreign trade in Quanzhou when this was one of the largest ports in the world. His work, *Zhu-fan-zhi* (“Description of the Barbarous Peoples”), incorporated some information from old sources, but he obtained most of his data by interviewing traders. The first part of his book describes ports and countries; the second focuses on products which Chinese traders sought. He does not mention any overseas Chinese settlements. Zhao implies that Chinese traders were not restricted to “designated” ports. Many new ports appeared at this time, some in areas which had rarely been in contact with China previously. At *Pu-ni* (perhaps Brunei), on Borneo, the traders:

. . . request the king and the grandees of his suite to fix with them the prices of their goods; this being done, drums are beaten, in order to announce to all the people near and far that permission to trade with them has been granted. Clandestine trading previous to the price being fixed is punishable. It is customary to treat the traders with great regard . . .<sup>12</sup>

Thus trade was not completely unregulated. We do not know how prices were fixed, but competitive bidding was obviously not allowed.



The second book was written a little over a century later by Wang Dayuan: *Dao Yi Zhi Lue* (“Description of the Barbarians of the Isles”). He was born around 1311 in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, a prosperous port with many merchants who dealt in Seasian products. The largest ships in the harbor came from Seasia; he describes them as being “as big as hills”. Nanchang may have been a center of porcelain trade in the Yuan period.

Wang made two voyages to Seasia, one from 1330 to 1334, the other from 1337 to 1339. We do not know what kind of business he was engaged in, when or where he died, or why he became the first Chinese sea trader to write about his experiences.

Wang quotes from Zhao Rugua’s *Zhu-fan-zhi*, and modelled his account after it in some ways, but most of his information was acquired through direct observation. He is the first trader to have left a record of Seasia. Wang was not a member of the literati class, but he had scholarly pretensions; the *Description* was excerpted from poems he wrote (which have not survived). Wang was less inclined to depict foreign customs and people as inferior to those of China than previous authors.

Wang only mentions two overseas Chinese communities, and one was not a trading colony. The latter community was a group of soldiers who were originally part of a Mongol fleet sent to invade Java in 1292, but became ill during the voyage (perhaps they became sea-sick because they had never been on a ship before) and were put ashore on a small island off the southwest coast of Borneo. No one ever went back to repatriate them, so they remained there, and were still living there when Wang visited the area 40 years later. The other group was living at *Longya men*, “Dragon’s Tooth Strait”, part of today’s Singapore. Perhaps there were more overseas Chinese communities which Wang did not mention for some reason.

## THE INTRODUCTION OF ISLAM

Tenth-century Chinese texts record visits from envoys with Arab-sounding names from the Chola Empire of south India, Srivijaya, and Champa. Muslim merchants had probably been given official posts such as heads of foreign communities in some Seasian kingdoms by the Middle Classic. Some Shiite adherents may have fled to Seasia to escape persecution, according to a fourteenth-century author, Dimashqī, who wrote about Champa. The Chinese-sounding surname “Li” which Chinese texts of this period give for some Seasian officials may be a transcription of Alids, who used the surname Ali in honor of Ali bin Abī Tālib.

A gravestone dated AH 475 (1082 CE) inscribed “daughter of Maimun” has been found at Loran, east Java, but scholars believe that this stone was brought to Java as ballast in a ship and is not evidence that a local woman had converted to Islam. The earliest Muslim tombstone which probably marks a Muslim buried in Seasia has been found in Brunei. It commemorates a Chinese Muslim named Pu (possibly Abu) who died in 1264. He may have fled after the Yuan defeat of the Song four years earlier. This is also the oldest known Chinese grave in Southeast Asia.

Marco Polo’s description of his journey back to Italy from China in 1292 reported that a city which he called Pērlak/Ferlec, probably the kingdom otherwise known as Samudera Pasai in north Sumatra, was ruled by a Muslim. Marco Polo thus gives us evidence for the founding of the first Islamic kingdom in Seasia, and the first conversions of Seasians to Islam. Samudera sent two ambassadors to China

around this time; both had Muslim names. They might have been locally born converts, or foreigners incorporated into the Samudera elite.

Archaeologists confirmed Polo's account of Ferlec/Samudera when they discovered the gravestone of Sultan Malik al-Salih; he died in AH 696 (1297 CE). His gravestone and others of this period in Aceh have epitaphs written in Kufic script, but with some Sumatran motifs.

## EARLY ISLAMIC SITES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Islamicization of the Southeast Asian archipelago was not a single event, but a series of processes which took centuries. Different agents and different modes of communication were important in different places and different times. As in the case of the transmission of Sanskrit culture, different actors were instrumental in different cases: teachers in some, merchants in others, sometimes kings and conquerors. Islamic influence no doubt came from several sources. The use of the Tamil title *Perumal* in Pasai, north Sumatra, and the importance of the Shāfi'i school of jurisprudence are pieces of evidence which indicate that south India probably played an important role in the dissemination of Islam to Southeast Asia. Gujarati merchants were powerful when the Portuguese arrived in Melaka in 1509. North Sumatrans imported tombstones from Cambay, northwest India. Probably Egypt and Gujarat were involved in the conversion of large parts of insular Southeast Asia to Islam.

The earliest evidence for the presence of Islam in the Siam-Malay Peninsula is an inscription from the east coast state of Terengganu, Malaysia, which was first recognized as an important historical object in 1902 when it was being used as a stepping stone at a small prayer house at a village named Kuala Berang (villagers had found it after a flood beside a dried-up river at a village called Tanah Batu in 1887). It dates from the fourteenth century,<sup>13</sup> is written in Arabic script, and records a legal edict. It is written in Malay with some Sanskrit words such as *dewata mulia raya* (god) as well as *Allah*. The stone has only partially been preserved; no name of a king or kingdom is found on the remaining portion. The law code prescribed different fines for people of different social rank, a practice not in accord with orthodox Islam.

Several rulers of Samudera used the reign name and title *Al-Malik al-Zahir*, possibly in honor of a Mamluk sultan who defeated crusaders and Mongols in Palestine in 1260. The Mamluk sultans of Egypt earned much wealth from the spice trade with Southeast Asia; they were the main middlemen who sold spices to the Venetians, who had the monopoly in Europe. This relationship motivated the Portuguese to explore a route around Africa and so cut out the middlemen. By the beginning of the Postclassic in 1400, at least three kingdoms in north Sumatra were under Muslim rulers: Samudera-Pasai, Aru, and Lamuri.

## Early Islam in Java: Majapahit

In Tralaya, a village which occupies part of the site of Majapahit's capital city of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is a group of tombstones with a combination of Islamic and Javanese motifs. One face

of the stones is inscribed with verses from the Koran in Arabic script. The other face is inscribed with Javanese motifs, including the Majapahit sunburst enclosing a symbol which may represent a palm-leaf book. There are no names on the stones, but they are dated in Javanese numerals, using not the Muslim Hegira era, but the pre-Islamic *Saka* year system. The dates range from 1376 to 1475 CE.<sup>14</sup>

Another important site for the study of early Islam at Majapahit's capital is known as the grave complex of the Cham Princess (*Makam Puteri Champa*). There is no textual basis for the folktale according to which this complex was built to receive the body of a Cham (or Chinese) Muslim princess. The complex has been a pilgrimage destination for at least a century, and has been almost completely reconstructed. Its ground plan somewhat resembles a Balinese temple, with three courtyards separated by gates. It also exhibits some Chinese elements such as a bridge over a small canal, walls with curving tops resembling the back of a dragon, and round portholes resembling windows in traditional Chinese gardens, but it is impossible to tell how old these are. The tombstone which is the focus of respect here bears a date in Javanese characters and *Saka* era equivalent to 1368–69 CE.

Given the lack of personal information inscribed on the stones, it is impossible to prove that the people buried under them were indigenous, but it seems likely that by the end of the reign of Majapahit's most glorious ruler, King Hayam Wuruk, in 1389, some Javanese of rather high social standing had converted to Islam. Majapahit's official religion, however, remained a Javanese blend of indigenous and Indian symbols and concepts until the kingdom's end. Islam remained a minority faith restricted to the north coast ports until the sixteenth century, during which it spread into the interior of Java and was at least nominally adopted by most of the agrarian population.

## SUKHOTHAI, AYUTTHAYA, LAN XANG, AND OTHER EARLY THAI KINGDOMS

The years between 1250 and 1440 in Thai history is a period of fragmentation encapsulated in the phrase “*muang* pluralism”.<sup>15</sup> *Muang* is a Thai word which refers to a kingdom, city, or country.<sup>16</sup> Sukhothai was a main Khmer outpost southeast of Chiang Mai until the 1240s when it fell to an alliance of Thai chiefs. Sukhothai became the first kingdom in the territory of modern Thailand to use Tai as its language.<sup>17</sup> Bang Klang Hao, Sukhothai's first Thai king, was succeeded by his son, Ramkhamhaeng (reigned 1279–1298). He was one of Seasia's exemplary “men of prowess” in Wolters' terminology. Under him the Sukhothai mandala grew to include Sawankhalok, Uttaradit, Kamphaengphet, and Tak. To its north was the mandala of Lan Na under Mangrai, with his capital at Chiang Mai; to the northwest was Ngam Muang's Phayao, and Lopburi was its southeast neighbour. Ramkhamhaeng's inscription dated 1292 characterized him as “the sovereign of all the Tai”<sup>18</sup> and states that “[a]ll the Ma, the Kao, the Lao, the Thai of the lands under the vault of heaven and the Thais who live along the Nam U and the Mekong come to do obeisance to King Sri Indraditya [Bang Klang Hao]'s son.”<sup>19</sup> This inscription has been considered to mark the birth of the Thai nation, especially since the establishment of the Bangkok dynasty in 1767 and the development of nationalism since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Ramkhamhaeng portrayed himself as a *cakravartin*, or universal monarch and center of a mandala; he received submission from places which extended from Sukhothai in the four cardinal directions.

Beyond modern Thailand's borders, Vientiane, Bago, and Martaban also paid tribute to him.<sup>20</sup> Wyatt suggested that part of the inscription was added posthumously to praise Ramkhamhaeng's kingship. Woodward interpreted Ramkhamhaeng's concern with social welfare as evidence of a vision similar to that embraced by the eleventh-century Bagan king, Kyanzittha.<sup>21</sup>

## SUKHOTHAI AND THE BEGINNING OF MUANG THAI

Sukhothai, like the Burmese polities of Inwa and Bago, formalized relations largely through patron-client relationships and marriage alliances with rulers of adjoining mandalas. Wyatt cited the example of the ruler of Nakhon Si Thammarat who indirectly submitted himself to Ramkhamhaeng because he owed personal allegiance to the Phetburi ruler who in turn pledged loyalty to the ruler of Suphanburi, who in turn accepted Ramkhamhaeng as his overlord.<sup>22</sup> The inscription of 1292 also described the walled city of Sukhothai and the king's support of Theravada Buddhism, including the appointment of a *Sangharaja*, or religious leader, from Nakhon Si Thammarat to lead the monastic order,<sup>23</sup> and the construction of a congregation hall known as Aranyik ("Monastery of Forest-Dwelling Monks"), now Wat Saphan Hin.<sup>24</sup>

The inscription also mentions major monuments. A large pyramidal structure built in the middle of Sukhothai comprises five storeys and represented the ceremonial center of Sukhothai. Two 18-cubit-high Buddha images were constructed to the north and south of the pyramid. The inscription also mentions "golden" Buddha images, which Gosling asserts must have been made of stucco, not gold or even bronze, as bronze-casting was only utilized in Sukhothai art 50 years later.<sup>25</sup> Ramkhamhaeng also built a stupa in Si Satchanalai to enshrine a Buddha relic (Figure 7.1).

What has come to be known as the Sukhothai style of Buddha images with its distinctive idealized "Thai" facial features and in a walking posture was characteristic of late fourteenth-century Sukhothai. Early Sukhothai Buddha images were large, but less aesthetically refined.<sup>26</sup> Gosling questions whether a Sukhothai artistic style existed during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Lan Na may have exercised considerable influence in the development of Sukhothai's artistic tradition, especially during the fourteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

Lo Thai (reigned 1298–1346/7) who succeeded his father, Ramkhamhaeng, did not have the requisite prowess to hold the vast Sukhothai mandala together. Smaller mandalas which had pledged allegiance to charismatic Ramkhamhaeng began to pull away, including Suphanburi. By 1320 Sukhothai's mandala had contracted to a small area.<sup>28</sup> While the 1292 inscription provided a long eulogy of the king, a contemporary inscription devotes only two lines to Lo Thai.<sup>29</sup> Despite its reduced size, Sukhothai continued to form a center of Buddhism. Both Lo Thai and his son, Lu Thai (reigned 1346/1347–1374) were strong patrons of Theravada Buddhism. Forest and urban monasteries and temples were built and became important centers of learning. Thai art also flourished. It was during the reigns of these two kings that a distinct Sukhothai art style emerged.<sup>30</sup> Lu Thai also produced ancient Thailand's most notable literary work, the *Traibhumikatha* ("Sermon on the Three Worlds"), later known as *Trai Phum Phra Ruang* ("Three Worlds According to King Ruang") in 1345 when he was viceroy of Si Satchanalai.<sup>31</sup>



**Figure 7.1** Sukhothai stupa

Sukhothai was an important area for ceramic production. The nearby site of Chaliang produced stoneware pottery between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries with a brown glaze similar to Khmer stoneware, but with shapes associated with a kiln complex called Sawankhalok which made excellent green-glazed ware. Sukhothai was a major center of ceramic production between 1300 and 1450, producing underglaze brown and white ceramics. Potters at Sukhothai used five spurred pontils instead of tubular kiln supports during the firing process.<sup>32</sup> High-quality ceramics from Sawankhalok and Sukhothai were exported throughout Seasia in the Postclassic.<sup>33</sup> Ceramic production also became prominent during the fifteenth century at production sites in the territory of modern Myanmar: Bassein, Myaung Mya, and Martaban. Martaban jars became an important commodity of trade in the next two centuries, attracting admiring comments in foreign travelers' accounts.<sup>34</sup>

## AYUTTHAYA: THE GOLDEN AGE

The establishment of a Thai (Tai) capital at Ayutthaya (Figure 7.2) in 1351 threatened an already weakened Sukhothai. Ayutthaya began to launch military campaigns against Sukhothai during the reign of Borommara I (reigned 1370–1388). Ayutthaya was established in the upper part of the Chao Phraya Delta at the convergence of the Chao Phraya, Pasak, and Lopburi Rivers.<sup>35</sup> Several Ayutthayan kings were related to the Suphanburi polity in the western part of the delta.<sup>36</sup> The founder of the Ayutthayan dynasty, Ramathibodi I, who was from U Thong, married a Suphanburi woman.<sup>37</sup> Ayutthaya's mandala soon incorporated Suphanburi and Lopburi.<sup>38</sup>

The fourteenth century was marked by struggle between Sukhothai and Ayutthaya. Both mandalas espoused a synthetic religion combining Buddhism and Hinduism to provide the foundation for kingship typical of Seasia: support of the religious orders and patron-client relationships based on marriage alliances and personal loyalty.<sup>39</sup> In the last quarter of the fourteenth century the relative influence of the two mandalas on their subordinate mandalas became unusually powerful. Ayutthaya had "superior techniques of organization", better geographical location, and access to a wider range of resources, including the monarchy's monopoly over maritime trade.<sup>40</sup> By 1378 Sukhothai reluctantly acknowledged itself as subordinate to Ayutthaya, but continued to attempt to reclaim its own moral superiority.

At the beginning of the Postclassic in 1400, Sukhothai's King Mahathammaracha III (Sai Luthai, reigned 1398–1419) rebelled, taking Nakhon Sawan, Nan, and Phrae, and threatening Ayutthaya's overlordship in the north. This event may have contributed to the decline of the Lopburi house in Ayutthaya's succession.<sup>41</sup> In 1412 Ayutthaya appointed one of its officials as chief resident in Sukhothai, effectively making the Sukhothai ruler a vassal.<sup>42</sup> When the king's son ascended the throne, he moved the Sukhothai capital to Phitsanulok in 1430, and eight years later, Sukhothai became a province of Ayutthaya.<sup>43</sup>

King Borommara II (reigned 1424–1448) was a powerful king with armies tested against armies of Angkor, Sukhothai, and Lan Na. Ayutthaya's armies swelled in numbers as war captives were incorporated. Borommara II restarted war against Angkor, which by the 1420s was much weakened following repeated struggles against Ayutthaya and Champa. By 1432 Borommara II successfully conquered Angkor. After Angkor became part of his mandala, the Ayutthayan ruler turned to the north,





**Figure 7.2** Ayutthaya

subsuming Sukhothai as a province in 1438 and attacking Lan Na in 1442. The struggle with Lan Na carried on for another 100 years, continued by Borommatrailokanat (Trailok, reigned 1448–1488), the son of Borommaracha II, who died in 1448.<sup>44</sup> Three major mandalas dominated Thailand in the 1450s: Ayutthaya, Lan Na, and Lan Sang.

### **LAN NA: “A MILLION RICEFIELDS” AND THE CENTER OF THE NORTH**

The origins of Lan Na can be traced to a Tai prince who migrated south from Chiang Saen to establish a new center, as recorded in the chronicles of Chiang Mai.<sup>45</sup> The chronicles describe the Tai prince, Mangrai, son of the ruler of Chiang Saen born in 1239, as a leader of vision and resolve who unified the northern mandalas, first establishing a center at Chiang Rai, before setting his sights on Lamphun (Haripunjaya) and founding Lan Na.

The early history of Lan Na is inextricably linked with Mangrai just as Sukhothai’s beginning is intertwined with narratives of Ramkhamhaeng. Mangrai features prominently in mediating a conflict

between Ramkhamhaeng and Ngam Muang, the ruler of Phayao. The prevention of war between the two rulers resulted in a three-way pact in which the three kings swore to honor mutual allegiance and recognize common Thai identity. These chronicles provide semi-historical allegories of kingship, the main goal of which is to provide an exemplary model of kingship. The chronicles of Chiang Mai were not written at the time of the events they depict, and they project a Thai identity back into the Late Classic by compilers who wished to present an image of continuity in the history of the Thai nation.

By 1281 Mangrai conquered Haripunjaya Lamphun and ruled all the northern territories. He sponsored the construction of monasteries and monuments, and established new settlements. Mangrai's conquest of Haripunjaya did not displace Mon population and culture, legislation, and script, except at the elite level, evidenced by the sudden termination of Mon language inscriptions.<sup>46</sup>

Mangrai desired to extend his mandala beyond northern Thailand. In 1289 he led a military expedition against Bago, but war was averted when Mangrai sealed an alliance by marrying the king's daughter.<sup>47</sup> Mangrai embarked on another military expedition to Myanmar in 1290, this time to Bagan. Warfare was again avoided when Bagan agreed to give him 500 families of goldsmiths, silversmiths, and coppersmiths.<sup>48</sup>

The site for Lan Na's capital at Chiang Mai was selected in 1292, but construction of the settlement only began in 1296. Mangrai, like his counterpart at Bagan, was distracted by Mongol invasions of Myanmar, Champa, Vietnam, and Java. The Mongol invasion of northern Thailand is less well documented than the others. The Mongols captured Chiang Hung in 1290; the ruler rebelled two years later, requesting Mangrai's assistance. Mongols sent troops to quell the rebellion and retake the mandala, but Mangrai succeeded in capturing it first. Mongol attempts to take Chiang Hung in 1301 failed, after which Mangrai and Chiang Hung raided Yuan territories. The Mongols eventually sought a peaceful resolution of their conflict in 1312.<sup>49</sup> Chiang Mai and Chiang Hung agreed to send tribute of elephants and products; Chiang Mai sent six missions between 1315 and 1347,<sup>50</sup> the last during the year the Black Death devastated many parts of Eurasia, especially Western Europe. The impact of this plague on Seasia has not yet been determined, but it seriously weakened the Yuan dynasty, which collapsed 20 years later.

Mangrai's mandala contained a diverse conglomeration of ethnic groups. The ruling elite of Chiang Mai were Tai, but after Mangrai's absorption of Haripunjaya and Lawa, his subjects included Mon, Lawa, and other groups. Mangrai may have sponsored a stricter Sri Lankan order of Buddhism as means of uniting his diverse peoples in a religious order which was neither predominantly Mon nor Tai. The northern Thai or Tai Yuan identity emerged from Mangrai's efforts to develop a political and social identity among the fragmented *muang* which superseded that of ethnicity.<sup>51</sup> One of Mangrai's contributions in the political legal field was a legal code known posthumously as the "The Judgements of King Mangrai", which laid down an important clause emphasizing the importance of freemen (*phra*) as the foundation for a strong kingdom.<sup>52</sup>

Lan Na under Tilokaracha (reigned 1441–1487), with its capital in Chiang Mai, expanded from 1450, pitting its strength against Ayutthaya by supporting a Sukhothai prince in his bid to regain his region. That campaign failed, but Lan Na continued to battle Ayutthaya, and campaigned against the Shan and the Vietnamese who invaded Luang Prabang, threatening Nan.<sup>53</sup> Tilok died in 1487 and was replaced by first his grandson, Yot Chiang Rai (reigned 1487–1495), who became very unpopular. He

was eventually deposed and replaced by Muang Kaeo (reigned 1495–1526), who was only 13 years old and proved unable to emulate the leadership of his great-grandfather, Tilok.

During Muang Kaeo's reign, major literary work was compiled: *Jinakalamali pakaranam*, a Pali-language chronicle<sup>54</sup> which records construction of new monasteries, copying of scriptures signaling the transition from orality to literacy in northern Thai society, casting of Buddha images, and patronage of the Sri Lankan order of Buddhism. This work indicates that Buddhism in Chiang Mai (Lan Na) was derived from two main traditions: Sri Lanka and Myanmar.<sup>55</sup> There were three monastic schools in Lan Na: Wat Chedi Luang, Wat Suan Dok, and Wat Phra Singh.<sup>56</sup> The author of the text, Ratanapanna, was a monk from Wat Suan Dok, where a famous monk, Thera Sumana, spent 16 rainy seasons before his death. During the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, Thai monks went to Myanmar to study and Myanmar monks went to Wat Suan Dok. Another important text was produced in the same monastery: the *Mulasasana* ("History of Buddhism") by Phra Buddhakankasana.<sup>57</sup> Even though Myanmar did not occupy Lan Na until after the middle of the sixteenth century, Myanmar Buddhism and traditions were already known in Chiang Mai by the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

Culture and religion in Lan Na were not accompanied by progress in the political and military spheres. Muang Kaeo died early in 1526 and his younger brother, Ket Chettharat (reigned 1526–1538 and 1543–1545), was a weak ruler who was dethroned by his officials in 1538, only to be recalled to the throne after Lan Na officials declared his son, who replaced him, unfit to rule and executed him. King Ket was soon assassinated. With the end of his reign, Lan Na's neighbouring mandalas such as Ayutthaya, Shan, Taungngu in Myanmar, and Luang Prabang began to contemplate absorbing it into their spheres of influence.<sup>58</sup>

## LAN XANG, "A MILLION ELEPHANTS": PROGENITOR OF LAOS

Lan Xang, or Lan Sang, was a confederation of *muangs* established sometime in the last quarter of the thirteenth century.<sup>59</sup> The early formative period of *mandala* polities in the region of Luang Prabang, northern Laos, remains largely unknown compared with the middle Mekong basin, the Xi valley, and Viang Chan plain, where polities such as Champassak, Thakhaek (That Phanom), Muang Fa Daed, and Vientiane were established. The same lack of information applies to the people who erected stone slabs and jars on the Plain of Jars (Xieng Khouang Plateau). Archaeological research on the plateau was inaugurated by Madeleine Colani, who hypothesized in the 1930s that the stone jars were utilized in prehistoric burial rituals. Colani conducted excavations which yielded burnt bones, ash, bronze and iron artifacts, carnelian beads, and cowry shells.<sup>60</sup> Recent excavations led by Thongsasayavongkhamdy revealed in situ burials which supported Colani's hypothesis.<sup>61</sup> Much unexploded ordnance from the American bombing of the 1960s and 1970 still hinders archaeological research in the Plain of Jars.

Accounts of events in northern Laos before the foundation of Lan Xang are limited to oral traditions and Lao chronicles compiled in later periods, such as the *Nithan Khun Borom* ("The Story of Khun Borom"), a creation myth in which Khun Borom assumes the role of ancestor whose seven sons settled in seven places. The myth is silent about the non-Tai speakers who previously inhabited the middle

Mekong.<sup>62</sup> One of Khun Borom's sons, Khun Lo, became the founder of the first Lao dynasty at Luang Prabang. The *Nithan Khun Borom* highlights the central role of migrations in the history of the Tai and Lao peoples along much-travelled mountain paths which connected plains and valleys where migrating groups settled. The people of the northern regions of Laos, like northern Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and other hill regions, have rich oral traditions not typically committed to writing.

Lao chronicles cited 1271 as the date when a dynasty was founded at Luang Prabang (Xiang Dong Xiang Thong), by rulers who assumed the title of "Phraya" ("He Who Upholds").<sup>63</sup> Fa Ngum, founder of Lan Xang, was a prince of the Phraya dynasty. In Lao legends, Fa Ngum was the son of a Luang Prabang prince who went into exile in Cambodia. With troops provided by the Khmer, Fa Ngum made his way from the Mekong valley northward, conquering polities as he advanced on Luang Prabang, which he captured in 1353.<sup>64</sup> A variant version suggests that Fa Ngum himself was exiled from the Luang Prabang court. He then made his way to the Khmer court where he won the hand of a Khmer princess, after which the Khmer king, Jayavarman VII, supplied him with troops which enabled Fa Ngum to regain his mandala. The Khmer thereby obtained influence in the north.<sup>65</sup> Fa Ngum set up the *mandala* of Lan Xang ("A Million Elephants"), then continued his expansion northwestward toward Chiang Hung, northeast to the Black Tai region, south toward Vientiane, Thakhek-Nakhon Phanom, Suvannakhet and Tchepone, and the Khorat Plateau.<sup>66</sup> Xieng Thong remained the capital of the new mandala.

Under Fa Ngum, Lan Xang's mandala was typically decentralized; the *muang* chiefs enjoying autonomy as long as they sent tribute to the king. Lan Xang's strength was predicated on its possession of manpower and its leader's personal ability. Lan Xang officials deposed Fa Ngum in 1373 when he made what they considered unreasonable demand for manpower to engage in warfare. Fa Ngum also had a reputation for taking the womenfolk of his men. His son, Un Huan, assumed the throne and ruled as Sam Saen Thai ("King of Three Hundred Thousand Tai", reigned 1373–1416). Like Ramkhamhaeng and Mangrai, Un Huan made marriage alliances with Ayutthaya, Chiang Hung, and Lan Na.<sup>67</sup> Lan Xang declined following the reign of Un Huan, underscoring the importance of personal qualities of rulers in the mandala system.

## FRAGMENTED STATES OF MYANMAR

The fragmented states period in Myanmar history refers to the approximately 100 to 200 years between the decline of Bagan as the Middle Classic capital of Myanmar and the gradual strengthening of the two centers at Ava and Bago (Pegu). Myanmar was divided into a number of distinct geospatial regions or mandalas which at times competed against one another, at other times formed alliances against others in an accordion-like fashion typical of the mandala system. The four regions comprised upper Myanmar, where three brothers governed the polities of Myinsaing, Sagaing, and Pinya;<sup>68</sup> lower Myanmar, where three coastal polities jostled for supremacy south of the dry zone; the Shan zone, comprising loosely bound mandalas of peoples inhabiting different ecological zones in uplands and valleys led by Shan chiefs; and western Rakhine, where the decline of Vesali resulted in fragmented mandalas prior to the emergence of Mrauk U.<sup>69</sup>

The end of Bagan at the end of the thirteenth century saw power gradually transferred from King Kyawswa into the hands of three ministers who were brothers: Athinkaya, Yazathingyan, and Thihathuya.<sup>70</sup> An inscription dated February 1289 in Kyaukse recorded that the three ministers had requested permission from Kyawswa, before he officially ascended the Bagan throne, to donate land to the monastic order. Kyawswa became king in July. An inscription in 1290 recorded that the ministers attended a royal dedication. In 1292 the ministers erected an inscription declaring that they defended Bagan against the Mongol invaders.<sup>71</sup> Athinkaya, the eldest, continued to pledge allegiance to Kyawswa until 1297. Athinkaya even went on a mission led by Kyawswa's son and heir, Singhapati and his brother in December 1296 to China. In March 1297, Kyawswa was recognized as the king of Mian.<sup>72</sup>

An inscription in Myinsaing describes King Kyawswa performing a lustration during a consecration ritual in December 1297. The king is characterized as Nan Kya Min ("the king who has fallen"). The date of the inscription may be contemporary, but it may have been dedicated and erected after 1297. Aung-Thwin based his theory on inscriptions produced between 1297 and 1298 which continued to give laudatory titles to Kyawswa. Chinese sources also indicate that Kyawswa's dethronement occurred after 1297. They stated that the three brothers captured the king and his sons after successfully attacking Bagan in 1298; the king and his sons were taken to Myinsaing, where they were imprisoned for 11 months.<sup>73</sup> The *Mahayazawingyi* also describes the king's removal to Myinsaing and his death in 1300.<sup>74</sup> The deposition of the king resulted in the ascendancy of the three brothers; one of them, Thihathuya, took Queen Pwasaw, Kyawswa's queen, as his own as was customary.<sup>75</sup>

The Myinsaing period (1298–1312) marks the beginning of a new dynasty and the shift of power from Bagan north to Kyaukse. This period has been referred to as the Shan interregnum because the three brothers were purportedly Shan. Aung-Thwin argues that this is an erroneous misinterpretation by Arthur Phayre; they were not actually Shan.<sup>76</sup>

The three centers at Myinsaing, Pinya, and Sagaing formed the locus of political power at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Sagaing was an old Burmese site established by Alaungsithu, Anawrahta's grandson (reigned 1111–1167). Its strategic position connecting the Ayeyarwadi and Mu river valleys and its access to vast irrigated rice fields demonstrate its continuing importance to Myanmar politics from the Bagan period on. Aung-Thwin asserts that when the irrigated lands of Sagaing were fully productive, they yielded more harvests than Kyaukse.<sup>77</sup> The second center at Pinya was established on the same side of the Ayeyarwadi River as Kyaukse and across from Sagaing in 1312 by Thihathuya. This center controlled the rice-growing region of Kyaukse. The third center was the seat of the eldest of the three brothers, Athinkaya. Bagan continued to be the symbolic center of Myanmar, and for some time retained control of one of the three main rice-growing regions: Minbu, south of Bagan. The brothers controlled Kyaukse and Sagaing.

Despite their growing power, the three brothers continued to accord respect to the king in Bagan, at least in their inscriptions. They referred to the king as *mingyi* (great king) and called themselves *min* (lord) or *amat* (official). Of 251 inscriptions erected between 1299 and 1368, only 24 were found in Bagan, 46 in Myinsaing, 34 in Pinya, 112 in Sagaing, 15 near Mandalay, and the remaining 20 in various other places. This suggests that Bagan had ceased to be the most important center for political and religious activities.<sup>78</sup> The three brothers were the actual rulers of the mandala.



In 1310 the eldest brother, Athinkaya, died. Yazathingyan passed away some time after. Thihathuya established Pinya in 1312 and assumed the title *Sri Tribuanaditya Buanadhamma Sihasu*,<sup>79</sup> which suggests control of the “three worlds” (Tri Buana). Thihathuya had earlier styled himself as a *mingyi* (great king) in 1296, but did not claim the status of Sri Tri Buanaditya (perhaps implying the ruler of a mandala which received tribute from satellite mandalas). The 1312 inscription reflects the more forward manner in which Thihathuya challenged the kingship of Sawnit of Bagan.

There were no super-mandalas in Myanmar at this time; Bagan and Pinya vied for control, but neither was able to subjugate the other although Pinya was the stronger of the two, having effective control of Kyaukse and Sagaing.

This impasse continued until the 1330s; Sawnit of Bagan died in 1331 and Thihathuya in 1332. Mandala centers remained in the region of Pinya and Sagaing where various kings ruled until both fell to the Shans (*Syam*) in the late 1350s and early 1360s.<sup>80</sup> In 1364 a man who claimed to be a descendant of Yazathingyan of Sagaing established the kingdom of Inwa (Ava) at the junction of the Ayeyarwadi and Myitngheh Rivers. This location was to become an area of prime importance over the next 700 years. In 1367 Thadominbya conquered Bagan and the Bagan dynasty, which had been so powerful during the Middle Classic, formally ended.<sup>81</sup> The only mandala which rivalled Ava during the fourteenth century was Bago, founded in 1385.

The Myinsaing episode demonstrates the highly patchy nature of knowledge of this period in Myanmar. Records, inscriptions, and later, chronicles, suggest multiple competing mandalas linked by alternating adversarial and reciprocal relations. Future archaeological research may provide clarity on the transition from Bagan to Myinsaing and finally the period when Ava and Bago represented the main mandalas of upper and lower Myanmar. Archaeological work may yield data on settlement patterns between the late thirteenth and late fourteenth centuries. Where were the major sites? What functions did they have, what kinds of hierarchy may have formed, and how were they connected to one another? What kind of activities did the people engage in? Very little archaeological research has been carried out at sites of this period, especially in locations believed to have been fortified towns during the Bagan period.

The Myinsaing episode is important because it provides an account of Myanmar's relations with other polities, Tarup-China in this case. Following the Mongol invasion and the flight of King Narathihapate from the capital at Bagan, Tarup-China placed on the Burmese throne a puppet ruler, Kyawswa. However, Kyawswa and his son were dethroned by the three ministers in 1298. The queen and a surviving son, Min Sawhnit, whom Queen Pwasaw put on the throne, requested Tarup-China's assistance. The Chinese sent an expedition to Myanmar demanding that Kyawswa be reinstated on the throne. The Chinese apparently did not know that Kyawswa had been killed in battle when they set off on their mission.<sup>82</sup> When they learned of Kyawswa's death and were offered tribute by the three ministers, the Chinese left. The mission extracted tribute, and did not support any particular ruler in Myanmar;<sup>83</sup> the result of the invasion was not very different from that sent to Java in 1292. Mongol China was in decline following the death of Kublai Khan in 1294, and the expedition sent to Myinsaing probably did not wish to expend scarce resources once they received tribute.

Myanmar's relations with Tarup-China continued to be framed as an asymmetrical tributary relationship. This relationship continued to inform Myanmar's interaction with China in subsequent periods



even though Myanmar mandalas became increasingly embroiled in competition and cooperation with mandalas in the Shan areas, in Assam and Rakhine to the west, south in the Tanintharyi area, and with Thailand to the southeast.

## MYANMAR IN THE LATE CLASSIC

Settlement patterns from the Late Classic period provide a complex image of development and dynamics of relations between walled settlements distributed across Myanmar. Wall construction represents an important point of continuity beginning in the Preclassic. Different wall shapes, configurations, sizes, and locations suggest a pattern in which smaller sites proliferated. This phenomenon can be explained either as a reflection of the establishment of satellite towns or fortresses following the demise of Bagan at the end of the thirteenth century (some of these place names are similar to those recorded in the chronicles), or a period of fragmentation and disintegration when no mandala overlords were able to build larger networks. These hypotheses cannot be tested until more archaeological research is conducted. Preliminary observations of settlement patterns of upper and lower Myanmar do not contradict textual accounts of political fragmentation between 1300 and 1550.

According to texts, following the demise of Bagan in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, three mandalas emerged in upper Myanmar: Sagaing, Pinya, and Myinsaing, governed by three brothers, Yazathingyan, Athinkaya, and Thihathuya, who were formerly ministers of the Bagan court.<sup>84</sup> The center of power shifted northeast of Bagan, partially driven by the desire to be closer to the fertile regions of Kyaukse and the Mu valley. The rulers of Sagaing, Pinya, and Myinsaing may not have had any choice when they moved their centers nearer to agricultural regions, even though they were also in greater proximity to potential threats from the north. Although some historians<sup>85</sup> emphasize the influence on policy of the desire to evade threats from the north, it is also possible that the relocations were undertaken in order to dominate the northern areas. Whether the brothers were Burmese or Shan is less important than their ability to incorporate Shan areas through alliances, marital or political; this provided the background to the establishment of the Inwa kingdom in the fourteenth century.

One of the important towns established in lower Myanmar in the late twelfth century is Muttama (Martaban) at the point where the Thanlwin (Salween) empties into the Martaban Gulf. Another was Bago, at the northern edge of the Ayeyarwadi River Delta. When the Mongols invaded in the 1270s, Muttama and Bago rebelled. Muttama gained supremacy in lower Myanmar under the leadership of Wagaru (Wareru, reigned 1287–1296), who was linked to the Tai to the east, especially Sukhothai and Chiang Mai, via marriage to a princess of Sukhothai; his father-in-law gave him a white elephant, signifying royal status.<sup>86</sup> Ownership of white elephants legitimized rulers, which explains why wars were fought over white elephants, especially in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. By 1385 a power shift occurred in lower Myanmar as the center of the *mandala* shifted from Muttama farther inland and northward to Bago. Binnya U became the founder of the new Bago dynasty.

The three mandalas in upper Myanmar were replaced by Inwa, founded in 1364, while Bago dominated lower Myanmar, comprising three sub-areas: Bassein (Patheingyi), Martaban (Muttama), and Bago itself.<sup>87</sup> Both Inwa and Bago reached their peaks in the fifteenth century.

Thadominbya, governor of Tagaung, founded a dynasty at Inwa (Ava). The Ava period (1364–1527) is described as a “period of fragmentation” and “the most troubled period of Burmese history”.<sup>88</sup> Inwa was established at the confluence of the Ayeyarwadi and Myitnge Rivers. The rectangular walls of the capital are visible on aerial images. Minkyaung Sawke (reigned 1368–1401) succeeded Thadominbya and continued to strengthen Inwa by alliances with the Shan chiefs, fulfilling kingly duties such as constructing and repairing irrigation works, and forming relations with Bago. The ascent of Rajadhiraj (Yazadharit, reigned 1385–1423) to the Bago throne challenged Inwa’s supremacy by embarking on northward expansion.

## LATE CLASSIC EAST JAVA AND BALI

The Late Classic was marked by the rise of Indonesia’s greatest pre-modern empire, Majapahit, from the ruins of Singhasari, a kingdom which rose in 1221 and fell in 1292. The period also witnessed the emergence of Islam, a force which, according to legend, ultimately brought that empire down. In reality the decline and fall of Majapahit was more complex, more protracted, and less dramatic than chronicles such as the *Babad Tanah Jawi* portray it.

### Singhasari

The story of the kingdom of Singhasari is one of the most colorful in Southeast Asian history. Founded by Ken Angrok after he assassinated Kediri’s ruler Kertajaya in 1221, the kingdom’s original name was Tumapel, and the palace was initially called Kutarama (“citadel of the ruler”), but in 1254 the name of the capital/palace (and thereby that of the kingdom) was changed to Singhasari. Angrok was murdered by Anusapati, son of Kertajaya. Anusapati was killed by Tohjaya, son of Rajasa. Tohjaya was assassinated in a plot hatched jointly by a son of Anusapati and a grandson of Rajasa. Tohjaya was succeeded by Visnuvardhana, who launched a successful attack against Sumatra. The last ruler, Kertanagara, was killed during a Tantric ritual in 1292.

Despite this atmosphere of bloody instability, the kingdom achieved major accomplishments such as the revival of stone architecture in Java after a lapse of 400 years with the construction of the temples of Kidal, Jago, and Jawi, and the subjugation of Malayu, the major mandala on Sumatra. The story of Angrok has inspired numerous modern dramatic interpretations, including movies and a rock opera.

Ken Angrok’s name marks him as a commoner. No contemporary sources describe his origins. The best-known account of them is a sixteenth-century chronicle called the *Pararaton* (Book of Kings). According to this text, he was the son of the Hindu god Brahma and a peasant woman. His mother abandoned him on a cremation ground, where a thief found him and raised him as his son. Angrok repaid his

benefactor by gambling away his possessions and then running away. He committed other evil deeds but his God-father saved him each time. After raping the daughter of a village chief, he fled to a cave where Siva and other gods lived. They adopted him and decided to make him king of Java. Ken Angrok then went to Tumapel, part of the kingdom of Janggala, where he became a member of the household of the governor, Tunggul Ametung.

Tunggul Ametung was no saint. He had abducted and married Ken Dedes, daughter of a Buddhist monk. Angrok fell in love with her. He persuaded a famous kris-maker to make a weapon for him. The kris was not finished on time, so Angrok killed the smith with the unfinished blade. As he died, the kris-maker cursed Angrok and seven generations of his descendants to be killed by the kris.

Angrok killed Ametung and married his widow, Ken Dedes. He adopted a more dignified name, Ranggah Rajasa, claimed to be the offspring of Siva Girindra ("Lord of the Mountain"), defeated King Kertajaya of Kediri in 1221, and established a new capital at Singhasari, in the Janggala area. Angrok demonstrated military prowess by defeating the other principalities of east Java, and created the first mandala to incorporate the major areas of the Brantas valley for the first time since the death of Airlangga almost two centuries earlier.

Contemporary sources on Singhasari include Zhao Rugua, who in 1225 described an east Javanese kingdom which he called *Sujidan* (possibly corresponding to modern Sukadana) which controlled southwest Borneo, Bali, and even a place named Wunugu which may correspond to Maluku. In Javanese epigraphy, Angrok is also known as Sri Girinatha. He was apparently an adherent of esoteric Buddhism, which incorporated the ascetic symbolism of Siva worshippers. Angrok was murdered in 1227 by Anusapati, son of Ken Dedes and the former ruler Kertajaya (known in the chronicle as Ametung), who in turn died at the hands of Angrok's son by a concubine, Tohjaya, who was in turn killed by Anusapati's son Ranga Wuni, known in inscriptions as Visnuvardhana. Whether or not the kris was responsible, the kings of Singhasari indeed seem to have been cursed.

Despite the instability of the kingship, the practice of building large stone temples was revived after a lapse of 400 years. Why this was done is unknown. Candi Kidal built in 1260 was the first of these. The practice continued for 150 years before it was abandoned for the second and final time.

Visnuvardhana reigned jointly with his cousin Mahisa Champaka (also known as Narasinghamurti) from 1248 until 1254, and then continued to reign until his death in 1268. He may also have ruled jointly for a time with his son Kertanagara. An important inscription from his reign known as Mulamanurung was written in 1255, which records that the king appointed family members to govern Madura, Kediri, other parts of east Java, and possibly Bali. When he died in 1268, two monuments were erected in his memory: in one near Blitar, of which no trace now remains, he was commemorated in the form of Siva; the other is Jago, near the modern city of Malang, a unique and elaborate monument with narrative relief carvings and beautiful statues of a number of esoteric Buddhist deities. Visnuvardhana was considered to be invocable there in the form of Amoghapasa. He was the only ruler of Singhasari who seems to have died naturally.

He was succeeded by his son Kertanagara, last king of Singhasari, who ruled from 1254 to 1292, overlapping his father's reign for 14 years. Perhaps Visnuvardhana followed the tradition of abdication to become a hermit.

Singhasari kings were silent epigraphically until 1264, when Kertanagara resumed the tradition of carving edicts on stone. In 1269 he issued the *Charter of Sawwardharma*, found on Mount Wilis, which exempted religious establishments from secular oversight.<sup>89</sup> These religious establishments included many communities centered on *risi*. These communities gained autonomy from the ruler, but lost access to government funding. Thereafter, Javanese temples became numerous but smaller than their ancestors in central Java; architects adopted elaborate perspective effects to make the temples appear taller than they are. The clergy copied the ancient inscriptions which recorded tax exemptions, making sure that these would continue to be respected.

In 1275, according to the *Pararaton*, Kertanagara launched a military expedition against Malayu (called *Pamalayu* in the Javanese text). The *Desavarnana*, canto 41, stanza 5, states that in 1275 the honored *Prabhu* (the late ancestor, i.e., Kertanagara) had ordered an expedition to be sent to the country of Malayu. “Intense was going to be their fear because of his being a divine incarnation.” Canto 42, stanza 1 adds that in 1284 he sent men to subjugate Bali. As a result, people from foreign countries “equally were striving for security, entering into the Presence at the Prince’s feet/ All that belonged to Pahang, that belonged to Malayu equally bowed humbly”.

A statue of the esoteric Buddhist deity Amoghapasa found at Rambahan in the hinterland of the Malayu kingdom bears an inscription dated 1286 stating that the statue had been sent from Java by the king, who is given the highly respectful title Sri Maharajadhiraja Sri Kertanagara Vikrama Dharmottunggadeva. The statue was supposed to be “a delight for all the people of *bhumi* (‘the land of’) Malayu”. Such “donations” of religious artifacts were signs of political dominance. Some historians<sup>90</sup> favour an alternative interpretation of these events, according to which Kertanagara was not signifying a claim to be the overlord of Malayu; rather he wished to form an alliance against the Yuan dynasty, which had assumed control over most of China in 1260. The Yuan rulers expected a much more servile form of tributary relationship than that which had traditionally existed between China and its vassals in the South Seas, and were capable of backing up their demands by direct military might.

Singhasari’s fourteenth-century successor kingdom Majapahit claimed Sumatra and the rest of the Indonesian archipelago as its vassals, in a continuation of Kertanagara’s policies. Bali only became subject to him after an attack in 1284 which resulted in the capture of the Balinese queen who was exiled to Java.

Kertanagara was a multifaceted personality. He was militarily aggressive but surrounded himself with literati who possessed profound knowledge of Javanese history. No Sanskrit inscriptions appeared in Java for 248 years until Kertanagara commissioned an inscription at Wurare in 1289. Another long Sanskrit inscription is incised on the lotus cushion of a large Akṣobhya statue, originating from a cemetery called Wurare on the site of the ancient city of Majapahit (now called Trowulan). The statue now stands in a little park in Surabaya, where it is the center of a cult. Kertanagara also revived Nagari script, which was used on two Amoghapasa bronze statues, and on stone Buddhist statues at Candi Jago. Sanskrit language and Nagari script must have been kept alive in Javanese monasteries during the long intervening period.

Sometime between 1285 and 1306 a Javanese princess named Tapasi married Raja Jaya Singhavarman III of Champa.<sup>91</sup> Though the precise date is uncertain, it is possible that this was part of Kertanagara’s policy of marrying daughters of rulers in his mandala.

In 1279, four years after the Pamalayu attack, Kublai Khan commanded the Javanese to send a close relative of the Javanese king to come in person and bow before the Yuan ruler. More missions from China in 1280 and 1281 elicited no response, so another Mongol envoy went to Singhasari in 1289; his face was mutilated by the Javanese. Kublai Khan then ordered an attack. By the time the fleet arrived in Java in 1292, however, Kertanagara was dead, assassinated a few months earlier by the governor of Kediri, Jayakatwang, in the midst of a Tantric ritual which apparently involved intoxicating drink. The *Pararaton* took a dim view of such a ritual, but the *Desavarnana* depicted the ritual as a solemn religious duty and characterized him as learned, virtuous, and devoted to Buddhism. When he died, he was said to have “returned to the abode of the king of the *Jina* Buddhas”, and to have been commemorated in statues of a *Jina* Buddha and Ardhanaresvari, a half-male, half-female representation of the esoteric Buddhist deity Vairocana and his female aspect Locana. His body was never found.

Very soon after Jayakatwang established himself on the throne of Singhasari, the Mongol fleet arrived. The Yuan troops, led by a Mongol, a Uighur, and a Chinese, considered Jayakatwang to be Kertanagara’s successor and therefore the logical target of their vengeance. The invaders became involved in a civil war between Jayakatwang and Prince Vijaya, Kertanagara’s son-in-law.

## Majapahit

The story of Majapahit’s foundation was discovered in a trunk of old papers willed to the library of the Royal University in Leiden, Netherlands, in 1888. Among these papers was a modern Javanese transcription made in Surakarta in 1782 of a document written on six sheets of copper found in 1780 on Mount Butak, a few kilometers west of Malang. The plates themselves have disappeared. The document was written in 1294 and describes dramatic events which took place on a mountain in east Java in 1292.

After the defeat of 1292, the defeated general Vijaya fled to this mountain where the villagers of Kudadu gave him refuge and conducted him to the coast where he escaped to the island of Madura. In 1293 he returned to Java, assembled a new army, and formed an alliance with the Mongol/Chinese army. The Mongol fleet defeated Jayakatwang’s ships at Surabaya, and then marched to Kediri where, after bitter fighting, Jayakatwang surrendered on 26 April 1293. Vijaya then turned on the Sino-Mongol army and drove it out. The Mongol/Chinese fleet took 100 Javanese prisoners of war, but the emperor punished several commanders.<sup>92</sup> Another inscription from Mount Penanggungan dated 1296 tells a similar story, of the gift of land to a man who accompanied him during his flight and successful attempt to gain the throne. A third inscription establishing another *sima* as a reward for assistance rendered during his time of travail found at Bojonegoro is dated 1310.

In 1294 Vijaya formed a new court called Majapahit (“Bitter Gourd”) and took the reign name Kertarajasa. Majapahit became the largest Seasian empire in history. It was established in a wasteland, but perhaps Kertarajasa knew that King Sindok had established a monastery there 400 years earlier. Within 50 years the kingdom’s fleet was capable of subjugating many mandalas from Sumatra to Maluku. Kertarajasa spent much of his reign subduing rival Javanese mandala overlords. He died in 1309 and was succeeded by his son Jayanagara.

Like his father, Jayanagara had to cope with frequent attempts by other mandalas to remain autonomous. He sent annual missions to China from 1325 to 1328, and sponsored important construction at the Panataran temple complex, but in 1329 he was assassinated as the result of his dalliance with the wife of his doctor. He was commemorated as Visnu Sila Petak at a shrine in the palace, at Bubat as Visnu, and at Sukhalila as Buddha. None of these places can be pinpointed.

Jayanagara had no son, and so was succeeded by Gayatri, Kertanagara's daughter and Kertarajasa's first wife, but she had become a Buddhist nun, so her daughter Tribhuvanatunggadevi acted as regent. Under her rule and through the efforts of her prime minister, Majapahit became a great power.

Gajah Mada began as head of the king's guard. He is supposed to have saved King Jayanagara from a rebel in 1319. In 1328, when Jayanagara was assassinated by the royal physician, Gajah Mada executed him. Next he moved to Daha (Kediri) where he became chief administrator, and was mentioned in the Walandit inscription as Pu Mada. He became prime minister in 1331. Almost immediately he led a victorious expedition against those who refused to acknowledge Majapahit's overlordship. He sent a mission to China the next year. The *Pararaton* gives him credit for territorial expansionism during Tribhuvanatunggadevi's regency. Majapahit invaded Bali in 1343, massacring the local ruling family. Legends from Sumatra record invasions from Majapahit. Remains of a rampart called Kota Jawa (Javanese Fort) near Kota Cina yielded Chinese ceramics of the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>93</sup>

Despite political unrest, Majapahit was prosperous. Wang Dayuan, based on his experiences in the 1330s (he probably visited Java), said that the Javanese were "the principal people of the Eastern Ocean". The buildings of the capital were beautiful, rice was abundant, thievery was non-existent, and Chinese manufactured goods such as porcelain, glass beads, gold, and silver were in great demand there.<sup>94</sup> The official in charge of markets received "eight thousand Chinese coins every day". Clay containers for these coins have been found, some in the form of pigs with slits on their backs large enough to admit a coin. Domesticated pigs were probably a source of wealth in fourteenth-century Java. An inscription of 1358 mentions 78 ferry crossings in Java, evidence of considerable overland traffic. Other texts refer to many occupational specialties from goldsmiths to drink vendors. Foreign merchants in the kingdom included people from many kingdoms in India, Khmer, Siamese, and Chinese.

Gayatri may have died in 1350; her daughter Tribhuvanatunggadevi died in 1372. A statue of a woman found at Candi Ngrimbi (Mojowarno, near Trowulan) depicts Shiva's consort Parvati. W.F. Stutterheim concluded that the statue represented her.

Gajah Mada served King Hayam Wuruk for 14 years. This was remembered as the apogee of Majapahit's history. The *Pararaton*, however, blames him for the massacre of the princess of Pajajaran, her father the Sundanese king, and many nobles who accompanied her when she came to marry Hayam Wuruk in 1357. Supposedly the Pajajaran king assumed she would be crowned queen, but Gajah Mada insisted she accept the status of concubine. The resulting argument is said to have led to a bitter battle.

Gajah Mada passed away in 1364. He is mentioned in the *Desavarnana* of 1365, which lists Majapahit's vassals throughout the archipelago. The *Pararaton* relates an oath which Gajah Mada swore to conquer many places. Majapahit's administrative control was limited to east Java and Bali, but Majapahit sent expeditions to other islands when subordinate mandalas sought to break away. A Chinese source



reports that Majapahit's commander in chief and his 30,000 soldiers were paid in gold, implying that a standing army existed.

Tribhuvanatunggadevi's son Rajasanagara (Hayam Wuruk), born in 1334, who had become king in 1350, was mature enough in 1364 to take over the reins of the kingdom from Gajah Mada. His uncle Vijayarajasa, otherwise known as Bhre Wengker, issued his own inscriptions in Bali from 1384 to 1386, suggesting that he exercised a great deal of autonomy. Artists of Hayam Wuruk's reign created great works of literature, sculpture, and architecture. The *Desavarnana*, written in 1365 by the court poet Prapanca, gives a glowing and by all accounts accurate description of the kingdom at the height of its glory.

In the middle of Hayam Wuruk's reign, shortly after the *Desavarnana* was written, the Ming overthrew the Yuan. The first Ming Emperor Hongwu sent envoys to Japan, Champa, and Java, to inform them of the new dynasty's existence. Apparently, letters from China to Majapahit were often sent via Champa, indicating that the route between Champa and Majapahit was quite busy.<sup>95</sup> Hayam Wuruk sent two missions in 1370. One received official robes, high slippers, and stockings, which they may have worn when they returned home. Majapahit was sufficiently cosmopolitan that foreign fashions would have been of interest.

In 1380 a major diplomatic incident occurred. A Javanese ambassador was arrested on arrival and sent home. The reason was that Hayam Wuruk became furious because China had recently accepted an ambassador from Sanfoqi, one of his own vassals and therefore not entitled to conduct foreign affairs independently. Majapahit agents intercepted a Chinese ambassador on his way to Sumatra to deliver the letter of recognition and killed him.

Hongwu decided that the incident was the fault of his own foreign office, which had not understood the political situation in Indonesia. The next year the same Javanese ambassador returned to China with a large set of gifts, including 300 slaves, and was given a suit of Chinese robes and paper money (which was now in use in China; it is not known whether it was ever used in Java). Another big mission came in 1381 with 101 slaves, eight big pearls, and a large quantity of pepper.<sup>96</sup>

After the Ming dynasty replaced the Yuan, relations between China and Seasia underwent fundamental changes. Hongwu (reigned 1368–1398) perceived commerce as a despicable profession. He ordered foreign countries to send missions to China only once every three years, or if there was a change of emperor. According to Hongwu, the system of sending envoys with tribute was only a commercial system in disguise. This change of policy had a major effect on commerce between Indonesia and China for 200 years.<sup>97</sup> One result was a scarcity of Chinese ceramics in Southeast Asia. Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar benefited from this situation by developing their own ceramic industries to service the Indonesian market.

After the death of Hayam Wuruk in 1389, his successor Vikramavardhana had to contend with an attempted usurpation by Virabhum, Hayam Wuruk's son by a concubine. Vikramavardhana himself was Hayam Wuruk's nephew as well as son-in-law. Seasian royal succession as noted previously was often fraught because of several structural problems: the lack of primogeniture, the cognatic kingship system, and perhaps most of all the rulers' practice of taking multiple wives of different statuses from first queen to youngest concubine. This system almost guaranteed struggles for the throne each time a ruler passed away.

After Gajah Mada died in 1364, Majapahit was divided into eastern and western sectors. Chinese records suggest that between 1370 and 1381 Bhre Wengker and Bhatara Prabhu (Hayam Wuruk) were the administrators of these areas. Virabhumī governed eastern Java under the title Bhre (“Lord of”) Wengker. Wengker was one of 20 provinces of Majapahit. The precise arrangement under which Wengker was ruled is unknown, but Wengker seems to have had considerable autonomy. In the early fifteenth century the relationship deteriorated into open warfare between Vikramavardhana and Virabhumī. The story of this civil war is told in Chapter 8, which is devoted to the Postclassic.

## Life in the capital city

Prapanca gives the impression that the population of Majapahit’s capital consisted entirely of nobles, soldiers, and religious officials. Archaeological research shows that Trowulan was a huge, sophisticated, and complex city. A wide variety of household utensils of clay and metal has been recovered, including humble kitchen ware, folk art including stands for offerings and figurines possibly for household decorations, containers for Chinese bronze coins (the everyday currency of Majapahit), and goldwork of a high standard.

Neither literary sources nor archaeology are yet able to give us an idea of the city’s layout. *Nawana-tya*, a manual of Majapahit court etiquette, says that the capital was “All where one can go out without passing through paddy fields”. Prapanca mentions several *kuwu*, which has been translated as “manor”. Probably the city was composed of a number of such units: large walled compounds in which lived a noble, his family, and many dependents, including servants, slaves, and others attached to him in some way. This pattern existed in Postclassic cities such as Banten and Ayutthaya.

Until recently, most archaeological research at Trowulan was concentrated on temples, tombs, and bathing places. Little systematic research had been done to uncover information regarding the nature of life in the city. It is impossible to estimate the number of people who lived in Majapahit, or even the exact size of area covered by the city. However, we now know that Trowulan and vicinity was densely populated during the Late Classic, and that its inhabitants were engaged in a variety of occupations.

Archaeological excavations have revealed brick floors and walls of dwellings. In some cases, two or even three layers of buildings are superimposed on each other. Water pipes made of clay with multiple joints resembling modern plumbing and drains indicate that at least some people enjoyed sophisticated water supply facilities. Traces of an urban water system have been discovered, including a large reservoir at the approximate center of the site, linked by canals to other water storage facilities around the edge of the city. The system was supplemented by wells lined with bricks or clay rings.

## Commerce

Trowulan was not accessible by water. All goods imported to the capital had to be brought 40 kilometers upriver from Surabaya to a market in a place called Canggu. From there to Majapahit’s capital was an

overland journey of another day and a half. The main port of early Majapahit was Tuban; in the fifteenth century Majapahit's major international port moved to Gresik and other settlements near the mouth of the Brantas River. This move may have been due at least in part to the formation of Chinese overseas settlement in that area.

Chinese reports, Javanese inscriptions, and the "Laws of Majapahit" (*Kutaramanawa*) all attest to the use of Chinese coins as Majapahit's principal money. The *Kutaramanawa* mentions numerous fines, the largest of which was 160,000 coins. A driver who killed someone with his cart or horse had to pay eight strings to the family of the victim. Criminals had to pay in money in cases where implements used in committing a crime were to be confiscated but could not be found. Payments for medicine had to be made if someone in the course of a crime injured another person. Those who would not allow their relatives to work land had to pay 160,000 coins.<sup>98</sup> The *Ying-ya Sheng-lan* states that Majapahit used Chinese money from various dynasties.<sup>99</sup> Ma Guan reported that Chinese currency was used from Japan to Arabia. During archaeological research at Trowulan between 1976 and 1988, 864 Chinese coins were found. Most dated to the Song dynasty. Because they were so common, most finds of Chinese coins were not recorded.<sup>100</sup>

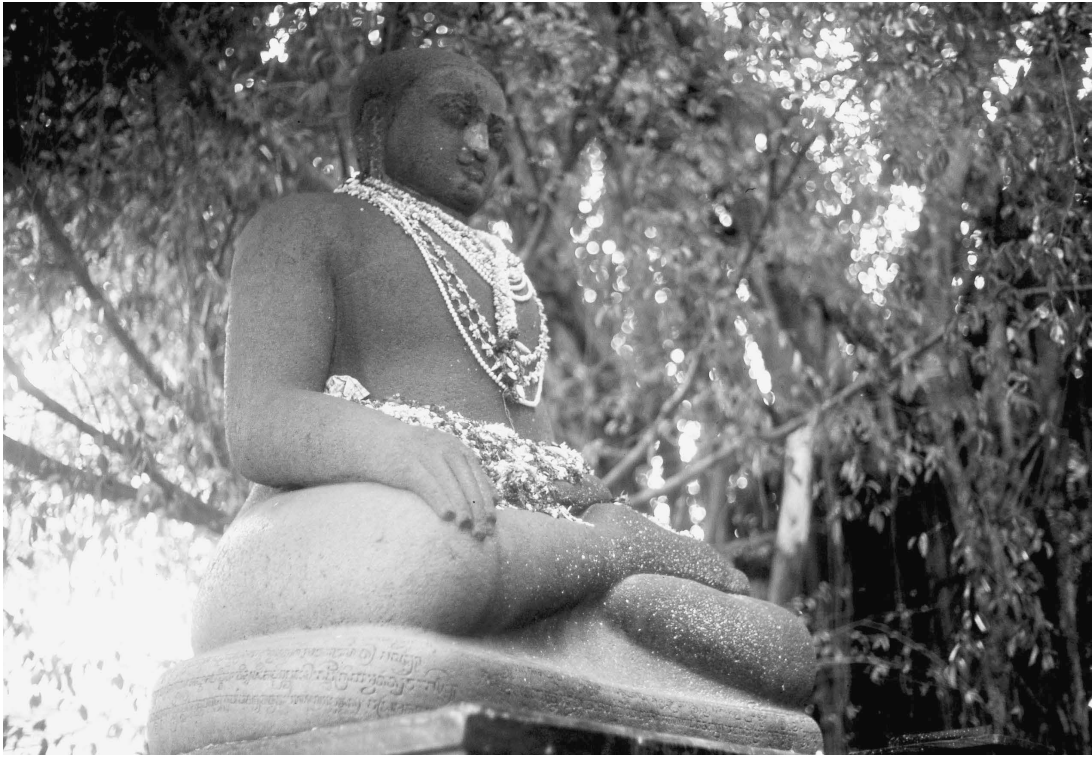
Java's exports included both commodities originating in Java and re-exports from other islands. Tuban and, later, Gresik were connecting points between local routes linking islands in the eastern archipelago to international routes leading to the Seasian mainland, China, and the Indian Ocean. The list of Chinese imports from Java is long. It included numerous edible items: spices, including pepper, cloves, and nutmeg; salt; coconuts, cane sugar, and bananas; minerals, including gold, silver, and sulphur; forest and maritime products such as pearls, tortoise shell, sandalwood, tree cotton, and cotton textiles. Another trade item consisted of slaves.<sup>101</sup> Rice is not mentioned, but it can be assumed that this along with other products was exported to other parts of the archipelago and other countries.

## Archaeology of Majapahit

### *The site of Trowulan*

A large statue called familiarly Joko Dolok, "Fat Boy" (Figure 7.3), bears a Sanskrit inscription which commemorates the reunification of the kingdom by Visnuvardhana and the consecration of Kertanagara as a practitioner of mahayoga tantra. The statue was found in Wurare, Trowulan, in 1817; its location then has been traced after a map compiled by the Dutch surveyor Wardenaar was rediscovered.<sup>102</sup> If the statue was originally meant to be there, then this is evidence that the Trowulan area was an active religious site before the foundation of Majapahit.

The village of Trowulan in east Java is surrounded by a huge archaeological site covering more than 100 square kilometers, almost certainly the Majapahit capital. Trowulan possesses monumental remains such as temples, tombs, and bathing places. Archaeological surveys and excavations show that Trowulan was densely populated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries by people engaged in a variety of occupations. Unfortunately, much of the site has been destroyed by people digging for old bricks



**Figure 7.3** Joko Dolok

and artifacts to sell. Much archaeological research is needed before it will be possible to reconstruct the basic outline of the city.

Part of the site is still called *Kemasan* (from *mas*, meaning gold). Gold ornaments and tools used for working gold have been found there, including small clay crucibles for melting gold, bronze anvils, and stone tripods with flat working surfaces. A bronze-working area is marked by numerous clay crucibles. Bronze statuary from the Majapahit period is rare. Instead, the bronze casters applied their considerable skills to such objects as elaborate hanging lamps. The wide range and technical sophistication of pottery indicate that this was a specialized occupation. The best pottery of Majapahit includes water ewers (*kendi*), with thin-walled bodies, graceful shapes, and glossy red-burnished surfaces. Poetry describes pottery decorations on the roofs of the city. Terracotta figurines were produced in large quantities representing many subjects such as gods, humans, animals, buildings, and even scenery. They may have functioned as household decorations.

Henri Maclaine Pont, manager of a sugar plantation which covered much of the site in the early twentieth century, constructed a plan of the palace which took into account the *Desavarnana*'s description. His underlying assumption was that the palace was part of a large mandala-like layout. Archaeologist W.F. Stutterheim came to different conclusions, based on comparison with Balinese palace complexes.<sup>103</sup> More recent archaeological research suggests that the area today known as *Kedaton* (Place of the Ruler)

which lies on the southwest side of the site was in fact the palace. The main principle governing the site's layout may have been north-south and east-west roads which met at a sacred junction.<sup>104</sup> Manors or *kuwu* were spread over an area of approximately 100 square kilometers, making the capital a very large urban settlement in Seasian terms.

Abu Ridho, for many years the foremost expert on Chinese ceramics in Indonesia, described the blue and white wares found at Trowulan as "imperial quality pieces" comparable to the imperial blue-and-whites of the Topkapi Museum, Istanbul, and the Ardebile Shrine in Teheran.<sup>105</sup> Ceramic experts have long suspected that "Trowulan, when fully studied, will provide one of the key ceramic assemblages in the whole of Southeast Asia. The ceramic finds here confirmed the historical importance of Mojopahit as one of the great international metropolis of Asia in the 14th-15th centuries."<sup>106</sup>

Despite the restrictions on foreign trade, Chinese porcelain was still available in Majapahit's market in the early fifteenth century. Ma Guan wrote that "The people of this country are fond of Chinese porcelain with green [or blue] flowers, musk, flowered and plain linen or silk, glass beads, etc.; they buy these articles with copper cash."<sup>107</sup>

From 1991 to 1993, a team surveyed an area of 11 square kilometers, or about 10 per cent of the entire Trowulan site.<sup>108</sup> One of the principal goals was to estimate the density of ancient population. A related goal was to study the differences between parts of the huge site in terms of spatial use, including economic activity and social status. Preliminary analysis discriminated among three types of materials: coarse earthenware, fine earthenware, and imported porcelain and stoneware. Of a total of 4,103.7 kilograms of finds, Chinese porcelain and stoneware comprised 10 per cent. Chinese blue and white porcelain from the late Yuan and early Ming are found widely distributed through the surface finds on the site, but the finest ceramics in the Trowulan vicinity were found in the southern part of the site.<sup>109</sup> This confirms that the palace site lay in the southwestern quadrant (Figure 7.4).<sup>110</sup>

### Temple sites of the upper Brantas valley<sup>111</sup>

Several important religious complexes are found along the course of the Brantas River that winds through much of east Java.

#### **Candi Kidal**

The *Desavarnana* says that Anusapati, ruler of Singhasari from 1227, "returned to Sivaloka" (Siva's place) in 1248. The *Pararaton* says Anusapati was the son of Ken Dedes and Tunggul Ametung, king of Tumapel, and was murdered by Tohjaya, son of Ken Angrok and Ken Umang in 1249. Both agree that he was commemorated at Candi Kidal as Siva. Probably Candi Kidal was finished for his *sraddha* ceremony 12 years after his death.

Kidal is the oldest known temple of this type in Java. It represents the resumption of permanent temple architecture in Java after four centuries. It demonstrates continuity with central Javanese architecture,





**Figure 7.4** Excavated dwelling area in the palace precinct of Sentonorejo. The hexagonal bricks form a walkway between foundations for dwellings. These are the oldest known dwellings in Indonesia which used brick as part of their foundations.

including division into a base, a hollow central shrine, and a tall, multistory superstructure; a kala head over the entrance; and ferocious beasts guarding the staircase analogous to *makara*. Kidal's proportions make more use of perspective effects and depict kala with a lower jaw, fangs, and two hands in threatening gestures. Rampant lions on the base replicate Candi Ngawen in central Java.

Kidal's most unique characteristic consists of three depictions of Garuda on the base. They symbolize the *Garudeya* legend from the *Mahabharata* in which Garuda redeems his mother, Vinata, who has been enslaved by her sister Kadru, and her naga children, by capturing the elixir of immortality. The *Garudeya* is depicted on east Javanese shrines, but not in central Java. The statuary from the shrine is missing. The main image may have been a statue of Siva now in the Tropeninstituut, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

### **Candi Jago**

The second surviving temple of the Singhasari kingdom was built for a statue of Amoghapasa Lokeshvara in which the soul of Visnuvardhana (who died in 1268) could be invoked. It is assumed





**Figure 7.5** Jago relief

that the temple would have been built for the *sraddha* ceremony 12 years later, in 1280 (Figures 7.5 and 7.6).

*Amoghapaśa*, a Sanskrit name meaning “unerring net or lasso”, is a manifestation of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. In Chinese Buddhism, he is one of six forms of Guanyin. Two famous stone statues of Amoghapasa were carved in Indonesia. One is found at Candi Jago (spelled “Jajaghu” in ancient inscriptions). The statue has an inscription which states that in 1268 King Visnuvardhana died and was memorialized as bodhisattva Amoghapasa in Candi Jago and as Lord Siva in Candi Waleri.

The other statue was sent by Kertanagara of Singhasari to Malayu in the thirteenth century. The reason for this act is disputed: It may have been a claim to suzerainty, or a means of solidifying an alliance against the aggressive designs of the Mongols. Kertanagara also ordered an unknown number of bronze plaques of Amoghapasa surrounded by 13 gods, dhyani-buddhas, and Taras. Five such plaques are known. They are said to originate from Tumpang, the village where Candi Jago stands. Inscriptions on them say that they were made by Kertanagara as “a pious gift” to earn merit for all creatures, especially his spiritual father, teachers, mother, and father.

The shrine contained images of a group of esoteric Buddhist deities established in Bengal. Other statues found at Candi Jago are carved with Nagari script, which gives the name of the deity portrayed. Some of the vocabulary is also found in Nepalese texts on esoteric Buddhist iconography.

Jago’s plan and profile are unique. The base consists of three terraces, the second and third of which are recessed. The building’s ground plan is rectangular rather than square like most other Javanese temples. Candi Jago revived the tradition of narrative reliefs like those carved at Borobudur and Prambanan in the ninth century. The texts illustrated here consist of an eclectic mixture, some Hindu, some Buddhist. The style of the reliefs represents a much more significant departure from the central Javanese



**Figure 7.6** Statue of esoteric Buddhist deity Syamatara from Candi Jago, now in the National Museum, Jakarta

period than the carvings at Candi Kidal. Such traits as low relief, flat perspective, distorted figures, and use of trees and other motifs to separate scenes which appear here had a powerful effect on Javanese art, and were replicated in many other sites during the following 150 years.

Candi Jago was remodeled in 1343/1344. An important statue found at Jago depicts Manjusri and bears the date 1343, indicating that the temple was revived as a significant holy site at this time. The

inscription records the construction of a *prasada* or temple by a nobleman named Adityavarman, who soon thereafter moved to Sumatra.<sup>112</sup> This inscription is an important clue to the relationship between Malayu and Majapahit in the mid-fourteenth century.

### ***Singhasari***

Singhasari was built on the site of the palace where Kertanagara was murdered. Like all ancient Javanese palaces, it was built of perishable materials. Ruins of seven or eight stone temples stood around a palace square, or *alun-alun*, in the nineteenth century, but only one, Candi Singhasari, survives today, and it is unfinished. It resembles Kidal in its general plan and cross-section, but is larger. It may have been under construction when Kertanagara was assassinated. Another temple which still stood in the early nineteenth century called Candi B measured 11 by 29 meters.<sup>113</sup>

The site yielded spectacular statues of Agastya, Durga, and Ganesa which were taken to Jakarta and the Netherlands in the nineteenth century. The Durga is perhaps the finest image of this goddess ever carved. It is not known whether the central image was a statue of Siva or a *lingga*. Other statuary is now collected in the temple's courtyard. It was probably assembled from temples which have vanished.

One of the most important statues from this site is a larger than life-size statue of Bhairava, a deity worshipped by both Hindus and Buddhists in Java during the Late Classic. A particularly fine Brahma image was found near the site of Chandi F, along with a statue of a *risi* which bears an inscription denoting that it depicts a *risi* named Ternawindu. Six *risi* figures have been found at Singhasari, a measure of the popularity of the ascetic teacher figure in east Javanese society. An inscription of 1351 reports that a shrine was built to commemorate the *risi* who were slaughtered along with Kertanagara. A statue of the esoteric Buddhist deity Prajnaparamita, a work of a very high standard, was returned to Indonesia by the Dutch government in 1978. A statue found nearby depicts a goddess enthroned on two corpses and bears a date of 1292; it must have been completed just before Kertanagara's murder.

### ***Candi Jawi***

Candi Jawi was built on the slope of Mount Welirang by Kertanagara. According to the *Desavarnana*'s account of a pilgrimage to the temple by King Hayam Wuruk in 1361, the lower room held a statue of Siva, while a statue of Buddha Aksobhya stood atop the pinnacle. The temple had been struck by lightning in 1331, probably destroying the Buddha statue (Figure 7.7).

At the pinnacle of the ceiling is a carved stone depicting the god Surya in relief, riding his horse across the solar disc. This is the first instance in Java of the practice of depicting Surya on temple ceilings. During the Majapahit period it was often repeated, with the modification that the edges of the stone reproduced the sun's rays in typical Majapahit style.

Reliefs on the exterior proceeded in a clockwise fashion, like those of central Java, rather than counterclockwise in the standard east Javanese mode. The reliefs have not been deciphered, but they are

valuable because they depict what are believed to have been thirteenth-century buildings constructed of perishable materials. They resemble traditional Balinese multi-tiered *meru* roofs used for sacred structures. The reliefs seem to depict religious processions and temple ceremonies.

### ***Ngrimbi***

The temple of Ngrimbi, west of Majapahit, is connected with *Tribhuvanatunggadevi*, who abdicated when her son Hayam Wuruk came of age. A statue of the goddess Parvati now in the National Museum, Jakarta, is thought to represent the regent in the image of the deity with which, according to east Javanese belief, her soul was reunited after death; in this form her protection could be invoked by later generations. She died in 1362; the temple was probably finished at the time of her *sraddha* ceremony in 1374. The temple bears narrative reliefs which have not been identified. According to one hypothesis, some of them may depict the Sang Satyawana legend.

### ***Panataran***

Panataran, the largest temple complex in east Java, is located near the south coast. The complex is divided into three walled courtyards, similar to modern Balinese temples, aligned with Mount Kelud. The first courtyard contains a building called the Dated Temple because the year 1291 *Saka* (1369 CE) is incised on it. Work at the complex began by 1197, according to an inscription erected by King Sringga of Kediri. The complex was modified at least 12 times between 1319 and 1454. The majority of the complex was built during the golden age of Gajah Mada and King Hayam Wuruk. The *Desavarnana* describes the king's tours of the site in cantos 17 and 61. The main temple (1323) and the bathing place (1415) can be dated by inscriptions.

The complex was dedicated to Siva. None of the main statues remains intact. A statue of Ganesa now occupies the Dated Temple's interior, but it is not certain that this is its original location.

Narrative reliefs adorn several structures. These include Tantri fables, the stories of Bubuksha and Sri Tanjung, and the Sang Satyawana story. The first terrace of the principle temple bears 106 panels depicting a section of the *Ramayana* from the arrival of Hanuman, the monkey general, in Ngalengka, Rawana's kingdom, until the death of the enemy giant Kumbhakarna. The second terrace of the main temple bears *Krisnayana* reliefs. The base was topped by a massive wooden structure, now vanished. Winged lions symbolize that the structure is a palace of the gods floating in the sky.

### **Late Classic literature**

From Hayam Wuruk's reign until the end of Majapahit, almost all inscriptions were written on copper plates rather than stone. Most were probably written on lontar/palm leaves. Majapahit texts such as the *Desavarnana* disappeared in Java but were preserved in Bali and Lombok.





Figure 7.7 Candi Jawi

### *Deśavarṇana*<sup>114</sup>

In 1894 a Dutch expedition to Lombok sacked the palace of the Balinese ruler. A Dutch official attached to the expedition to recover important antiquities salvaged several manuscripts, one of which was a copy made in 1740 of a poem written in 1365 by Prapanca, Majapahit court poet and a Buddhist. The poem, popularly known as *Nagarakrtagama* but properly referred to as *Desavarṇana* (“Description

of the Country”), gives the most complete surviving description of a Classic Indonesian kingdom. The work follows tradition by opening with praises of the ruler (in this case Hayam Wuruk) as an incarnation of the supreme god. The poem then describes the royal compound surrounded by a brick wall with a main gate and huge, decorated iron doors. Outside the north gate was a very long building where the courtiers met once a year, a marketplace, and a sacred crossroad.

Just inside the north gate was a large courtyard with religious buildings. In a smaller western courtyard, which Prapanca describes as constantly crowded and noisy, were pavilions surrounded by a canal; perhaps people bathed there. In 2015 preserved portions of a brick-lined canal were discovered northwest of the Kedaton sector of Trowulan; this may correspond to the area described here.

Palace servants lived in rows of houses along a road south of the court, separated into different sections by rank. A third courtyard was crowded with houses and a great hall where those who were to be admitted into the ruler’s presence waited. The royal quarters were east of this courtyard: one for the king’s father, one for the king himself, and one for the king’s sister and her husband. Quarters for priests of Siva and Buddha were nearby; the manors of Gajah Mada and other nobles were farther away, separated from the palace by open fields.

Cambodia, south Burma, Champa, Siam, and other countries were “protected by the Illustrious Prince”. Prapanca distinguished Vietnam from the others as “a friend, regular”. Vietnamese ceramics of the fifteenth century are plentiful among the archaeological remains of Trowulan.

The court made annual tours of the kingdom, including visits to important religious sites which still exist today. Some were already in poor condition, such as the memorial temple for the first king of Majapahit, Kertarajasa, which was moved from a remote location to a place where it could be more easily maintained. Prapanca listed all the religious domains of east Java, which were of many types.

Another topic of the poem is a description of the *sraddha* ceremony in 1362, held 12 years after the death of a person when the soul was believed to be free of all earthly bonds. This particular occasion was the twelfth anniversary of the death of Gayatri, widow of the assassinated king of Majapahit. Gajah Mada led the ritual, and King Hayam Wuruk performed a ritual dance.

### ***Pararaton***<sup>115</sup>

Pararaton, the book “On Kings/Queens” was composed around 1500; the oldest surviving version was written in 1600. About half the book tells the story of Ken Angrok. It describes him as an incarnation of Visnu, son of Bhatara Guru (Siva), and the offspring of a union between the god Brahma and a village woman. The second half of the book provides a history of the kingdoms of Singhasari and Majapahit up to 1478 CE. It is probably based on oral tradition rather than texts, and cannot always be accepted as historically accurate.

### ***Kunjarakarna***<sup>116</sup>

The oldest surviving text of the epic poem Kunjarakarna, which depicts a visit to hell and the punishments of the damned, dates from the mid-fourteenth century. It deals with a common theme of east



Javanese Classic literature: redemption through meditation and devotion to the law of righteous conduct. The text emphasizes that neither Hindus nor Buddhists will obtain release from existence if they try to separate Siva and Buddha, who are in reality one entity. The eponymous hero of the tale is a demon who practiced asceticism, was taught by the *Jina* Buddha Vairocana, and escaped from rebirth by visiting hell. While there, he saw a cauldron of boiling water intended for the torture of his friend Purnawijaya. Although a virtuous person, in a previous existence he had committed sins which necessitate a long period of punishment. Upon returning to earth, Kunjarakarna advised Purnawijaya to ask Vairocana for assistance. The torments of the damned are depicted on monuments, including Early Classic Borobudur; Late Classic Candi Jago near Malang, around 1280 and on the ceiling of the nineteenth-century hall of justice in Klungkung, Bali.

### **Sutasoma**<sup>117</sup>

Sutasoma is a personal name of characters in the *Jatakamala*, including the future Buddha. In the *Cula Sutasoma* Jataka, the bodhisattva, became king of Sudassana (Varanasi) and had many wives, but wanted to become an ascetic. When his hair turned gray, Sutasoma abdicated the throne and spent the rest of his life in a hermitage built for him by Sakka (Indra). In the *Maha Sutasoma* Jataka, the bodhisattva, was again a prince named Sutasoma. Mpu Tantular's *Kakawin Sutasoma* of fourteenth-century Java expands this story. In an important passage, Prince Sutasoma explains the basic principles of the Śaivite path to salvation in terms of a "six-limbs" system representing a Tantric school of Yoga, and then expounds a Buddhist doctrine focusing on non-dual wisdom, the "perfection of wisdom", and the breath of *pranayama*, which can enable the seeker for enlightenment to reach the highest reality.

Canto 139, stanza 5, contains the following passage: "It is said that the well-known Buddha and Śiva are two different substances. They are indeed different, yet how is it possible to recognize their difference in a glance, since the Truth of Jina and [the Truth of] Śiva is One. They are indeed different, but they are of the same kind, [*bhineka tunggal ika*] as there is no division in Truth." The phrase *bhinneka tunggal ika* is now Indonesia's national motto.

### **Parthayajna**<sup>118</sup>

The title Parthayajna means "Book of the Forest". It was inspired by the *Mahabharata*'s tale of the five Pandawa brothers, especially the adventures of Arjuna during his exile. Yudhisthira, elder Pandawa, loses at dice and has to abdicate the throne for 12 years. The five brothers go into the forest where their common wife, Drupadi, is molested by one of their Korawa cousins. They encounter hermits and a noble anchoress, Mahayani, who instruct them in righteous behavior, including the worship of Siva. They have to reject temptations such as beautiful women. A goddess from their palace appears. They are advised to go to Mount Indrakila to obtain a magic weapon which will enable them to avenge themselves against the Korawa. On their journey they pass a lake in which is a giant elephant-shaped rock where they meet Kama and Ratih, god and goddess of love. At another body of water they meet a demon

who is defeated by the divine glow of Arjuna. Eventually they reach Mount Indrakila, where Arjuna has to do penance before obtaining the weapons which ensure the Pandawas' eventual victory. The *Arjun-awiwaha* forms a sequel to the *Parthayajna*. This poem is illustrated on Candi Jago.

### **Sivaratrikalpa**

Sivaratrikalpa, a *kakawin*, tells the story of Lubdhaka, a low-caste hunter, who lives in sin because he has killed many animals, but is allowed to enter heaven because he accidentally performed an act of Siva worship by dropping a leaf onto a *lingga*. The story is intertwined with instructions for lingga worship. There were several Śaivite sects in Java of which Sivasiddhanta was probably most popular. Inscriptions refer to religious officials of the central government who were Sivasiddhanta followers. The Sivasiddhanta religion in Java and Bali differed from that of south India, because in Indonesia Sivasiddhanta was strongly influenced by Vedanta and Samkhya teachings. Several Siva-Siddhanta texts have been found in Indonesia. The oldest may be the *Bhuvanakosa*, thought to date from the tenth century.

### **Bali**

In 1284, according to the *Desavarnana*, Kertanagara captured a Balinese queen and took her back to Singhasari. Some inscriptions refer to an official who may have been appointed by the Javanese as a governor. Balinese chronicles record unsuccessful Javanese invasions during the early fourteenth century, but in 1343, another Javanese army led by Gajah Mada imposed Javanese suzerainty. Mpu Prapanca describes Bali as faithfully adopting Javanese customs, with numerous Buddhist domains established by priests of the Vajradhara esoteric persuasion.

The last lithic inscription carved in 1384 mentions King Kudamrita from Wengker, east Java. Chronicles say that Majapahit fell to Islamic forces in 1478, whereupon some nobles and priests fled to Bali. There is no confirmation of this. There is no record of a clash between Majapahit and a Muslim kingdom. Bali retained its former religion and preserved many texts which had probably once been known in Java, including religious literature, grammar, medicine, poetry, and history. Inscriptions provide a fairly detailed picture of Bali's economy at the end of the Classic period. Regulations governed the division of irrigation water, water taxes, construction of irrigation channels, the protection of certain trees, hunting, and taxes on farmers. Supra-village irrigation organizations called *subak*, found in modern Bali, may already have existed at this time; the term *kasuwakan* appears in inscriptions.

One connection between Java and Bali during the fourteenth century was the spread of a new form of Brahmanism called Siva-Siddhanta, which de-emphasized the use of statues. In modern Balinese temples, and perhaps in fifteenth-century Java, worship was directed to elevated structures resembling altars but which are actually stone seats, where gods can be invoked to manifest themselves invisibly during worship. Old statues were not destroyed but stored away. Terraced temples similar to fifteenth-century Javanese complexes are found at Sembiran, on the north coast, and at Besakih, still one of the most

important Balinese temples. Siva-Siddhanta texts in Bali show that a significant goal of temple ritual was to facilitate the liberation of the souls of rulers from worldly bonds and unifying with a god, a process called *moksa*, literally “returning home”.<sup>119</sup> During the Classic period statues were used to facilitate this process, but in the Postclassic no more statues were carved. Texts do not mention the worship of the statues of the kings or queens, nor of the disposal of corpses.<sup>120</sup>

## LATE CLASSIC SITES IN BORNEO

According to local tradition, Tanjungpura on the Nagara tributary of the Barito River in south Kalimantan Province was settled by Malays from Srivijaya in the Early Classic. Tanjungpura is one of three countries settled by three young men who appeared magically on a hill in Palembang. According to local sources, Nagara was settled by migrants from east Java during the Late Classic. Place names which seem to have been borrowed from east Java in ancient times include Kahuripan, Kediri, and Daha. The *Desavarnana* mentions this kingdom.<sup>121</sup>

A chronicle contains detailed stories of the founding of a kingdom with a Sanskritized name, Nagara-Dipa, by invaders from Java who overthrew the previous kingdom of Nan Sarunai. The chronicle contains accounts of missions to China, Majapahit, and the construction of a religious structure, Candi Agung (“the Great Temple”) at Amuntai. A brick temple which may date from the eighth century has been found there. Two possible Classic-period religious structures are marked by remains of square-terraced mounds (called *punden* in Indonesia) with remains of brick buildings on top of them.<sup>122</sup> One of these at Margasari consists of three terraces: the bottom measures 100 meters on a side and 2 meters in height, the second is 70 meters square and 2 meters tall, and the third is 30 meters square and 1 meter tall. The interior of the mound is made of special clay brought from certain local riverbeds. This building is believed to have been dedicated to Siva, because of the presence of a fragmentary lingga and a bull, symbolizing Siva’s mount, Nandi. Five hundred meters away is a well lined with Classic-style bricks.<sup>123</sup> Another brick temple assigned to the fourteenth century was found at Candi Laras.

Research in the village of Penggandingan, North Daha Subdistrict, in 2007 yielded important finds, including jewellery of gold and tin/lead. The forms of jewellery were varied, including rings and a gold bead. Gold foil with geometric symbols also was recovered. One of the items is a gold ear ornament with a Garuda image also found in assemblages in Java and the Philippines, dateable to the Late Classic period.<sup>124</sup> Carnelian and glass beads were also recovered; the glass beads are mainly of the Indian matte brownish-red type sometimes called “Trade Wind Beads”. Artifacts such as roof tiles found here were used in east Java during the fourteenth century, but outside of that area they are quite unusual. This discovery suggests that the site is either the residence of a member of the elite or a shrine which displayed attributes of Javanese culture. A brownish *kendi* at the site appears to belong to the Fine Paste Ware category probably made in the Satingphra area of southern Thailand. It has been found on numerous shipwrecks as well as land sites of the Middle and Late Classic periods in Indonesia.<sup>125</sup>

In the Kutai region of east Borneo, sites have yielded important remains from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. The chronicle *Salasilah Kutai* describes a kingdom known as Martapura in Tanah

Hulu, Muara Kaman, which existed in the late pre-Islamic period. Other important sites which have yielded statuary from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries include Mount Kombeng, where a Ganesa statue and other Hindu sculptures were discovered, and at the estuary of the Rata River. The Sultan of Muara Kaman in the colonial era wore a gold Visnu and gold tortoise for official occasions, which probably date from the pre-Islamic period.

## LATE CLASSIC SUMATRA: MALAYU

At the beginning of the Late Classic period the Chinese continued to use the name *Sanfoqi*, “Three Vijayas”, as a general term for southeast Sumatra. This is partly a symptom of the fact that the Chinese court did not have much information about the political situation in the region. In the Yuan period, Chinese references become more precise: the names Malayu and Palembang are used. Chinese merchants who voyaged to Sumatra probably brought this information. *Dao-yi-za-zhi*, written in the 1270s, and *Da-de-nan-hai-zhi* (1304) called Sanfoqi a *guo*, or country, suggesting that it was an overlord of other principalities. At the beginning of the Late Classic, the overlord of the Sanfoqi mandala lived in the Batanghari valley of Jambi.

Jambi was known for wood carving, but Zhao Rugua wrote that Sanfoqi was rich because ships from many countries met there, but Sanfoqi used violence, if necessary, to make passing ships call at its harbor (and pay duty). This practice was not unique to Sumatra; it had been established in the Indian Ocean as well as in the Straits of Melaka for more than 1,000 years. At Sanfoqi one could obtain the best mats from Borneo, as well as many products from Arab and Persian lands. Sanfoqi had 15 vassals, including Palembang (showing that Palembang was not the center of the Sanfoqi mandala), north Sumatra (Lamuri), and west Java. Zhao included Tambralingga among Sanfoqi’s vassals, but Tambralingga set up an inscription at Chaiya in 1230 which suggests that it did not consider itself subordinate to Sanfoqi.

According to Zhao, Sanfoqi’s capital covered a large area protected by a brick wall. This sounds similar to Angkor Thom and Bagan. The common people lived either in low-density settlements nearby, or on rafts on the river; one of their motives for this lifestyle was that they had to pay no tax. This indirectly shows that the kingdom did levy some kind of tax on land.

Song ceramics are found in several sites along the Batanghari. A gong found at one of the temple sites here, Candi Kembar Batu, is inscribed with Chinese characters giving the date 1231 CE and mentioning an official named Hung.<sup>126</sup> Indonesian sources of this period frequently refer to Malayu as the name of a mandala in southeast Sumatra.

In 1275 the *Pamalayu* expedition launched by King Kertanagara of Singhasari imposed Javanese suzerainty. Some historians claim that his was a peaceful alliance, but this is unlikely, given both the long history of violence between the two regions and statements in Javanese sources such as the *Desavarnana*. The base of a statue of the esoteric Buddhist deity Amoghapasalokesvara bears an inscription of 1286 stating that the statue had been brought from Java to Suvarnabhumi (Sumatra) by Javanese officials and erected at Dharmasraya (the name of the mandala) by Maharaja Kertanagara. The statue

was found at Padang Roco (“Field of Statues”), 250 kilometers up the Batanghari near the mountains of western Sumatra.

Jayavarman VII, twelfth-century ruler of Angkor, sent images to subordinate provinces in Thailand. It is highly probable that this was the implication of this statue. The capital of the Malayu mandala had moved here by this time. Muara Jambi and the other settlements in the lower Batanghari seem to have been abandoned. No fourteenth-century Chinese porcelain has been found in the lowlands, whereas a large Chinese colony formed at Srivijaya’s old harbor, Palembang. An Indonesian archaeologist has concluded that a 7-kilometer-long stretch of the Batanghari from Rambahan to Padang Roco was the center of the thirteenth-century kingdom of Malayu Dharmasraya.<sup>127</sup>

Kertanagara’s invasion did not have lasting consequences; Malayu sent ambassadors to China in 1280, 1293, 1299, and 1301. In 1281 the Yuan sent two Muslim envoys to Malayu. In 1293, according to the *History of the Yuan*, the Yuan sent an envoy to “the small countries of Malayu” to deliver an imperial order that the kings send their brothers or sons to China to show their loyalty to the emperor; it is recorded that they complied, unlike Kertanagara. There is thus no evidence that any anti-Mongol alliance was formed. Marco Polo in 1292 described the city of Malayu as “very large and noble”, a center of spice trade, but he did not visit it.

A little more than a century after Zhao Rugua, Wang Dayuan stated that Sanfoqi was densely populated, the land fertile. The people lived on pile-dwellings and gathered oysters. It produced some valuable commodities, including carved wood.

Soon after Wang Dayuan’s visits in the 1330s, Java reasserted its dominance over Sumatra according to both the *Pararaton* and *Deśavarṇana*. Prapanca described Majapahit’s relations with Sumatra as follows: “the principal ones are all those that belong to the country of Malayu: namely Jambi and Palembang” and others on Sumatra. “These are the most important ones of those belonging to the country of Malayu, one country, equally executing (orders), following (commands).”

After the “Malay lands” of Jambi and Palembang, Prapanca listed *Tēba* and *Dharmaśraya* (both places in hinterland Jambi), followed by places in the lower Batanghari, *Manangkabwa* (Minangkabau), the people of Tanah Datar and vicinity, then four rivers in east Sumatra (Siak, Rokan, Kampar, and Pane), followed by Kampe (several places in lowland east Sumatra have borne this name), Haru, Mandahiling, *Tumihang* (Tamiang), and *Parlak* (Perlak), associated with places and ethnic groups in the region between Lake Toba and Aceh; next *Lwas* (Padang Lawas?), Samudera and Lamuri (north coast of Aceh), *Batan* (Batam?), Lampung, and Barus.<sup>128</sup> Thus the highlands of Sumatra were at the forefront of lands which the east Javanese court liked to think were its subjects. This is a good indication of the economic importance of these regions for the Javanese. Products like gold, silver, copper, mercury, ivory, and incense came from these highlands.

## Adityavarman

One of the few people who left a substantial epigraphic record in Classic Southeast Asia is Adityavarman. Details of his life are vague, but a circumstantial biography of him can be compiled by combining

the many inscriptions he left in Java and Sumatra with secondary sources and chronicles. He was born in east Java, but his mother may have been a Sumatran princess. The Kuburajo I inscription says Adityavarman was the son of Advayavarman. Pagarryung VII says he had a brother named Akarendravarman. Saruaso II says he had a son, Ananggavarman; another at Lubuk Layang mentions another son, Bijayendravarman. He may have gone to China on a diplomatic expedition in 1325, if he is the envoy named *Seng-jia-li-yeh* in Chinese sources. In 1343 his name was inscribed on a statue of the bodhisattva Manjusri at Candi Jago. He may have been responsible for the reconstruction of the temple at this time. In 1347 he was in the highlands of West Sumatra, where he spent the rest of his life.

He may have been deputed to Sumatra as a viceroy of Majapahit because his mother's Sumatran ancestry would have made him acceptable to local chiefs. The majority group in the area, the Minangkabau, is matrilineal. In 1347 he had his name inscribed on the Amoghapasa statue sent there by Kertanagara in 1286. Chinese ceramics and other archaeological remains show that the capital of Malayu had been in this area instead of the lower Batanghari since the mid-thirteenth century. The reasons for the move are unknown. It may have been partly motivated by a desire to exert direct control over sources of gold and other valuable resources. An inscription describes him as the Lord of the Land of Gold. Another motive may have been the desire to escape Javanese control.

Adityavarman's inscriptions in Sumatra are written in an idiosyncratic form of "localized Malay Sanskrit". It is comparable to the use of Latin in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or "Archipelago Sanskrit" which was used in Bali until recently.<sup>129</sup>

The script is similar to that of Majapahit, but probably did not originate in Java. It may have developed over the centuries in Sumatran monasteries and possibly the royal palaces of Srivijaya and Malayu.<sup>130</sup> He soon moved from Padang Roco to another location farther north at a place called Bandar Bapahat near his probable palace where he left many inscriptions, one in two scripts: one local, the other in South Indian Grantha. It was formerly thought that the language of the text written in Grantha was Tamil, but it is now known that both were in Sanskrit.<sup>131</sup> The lost inscription was incised on the walls of a channel for water carved from rock; Bandar Bapahat means "carved water management system" in Minangkabau.<sup>132</sup>

The Amoghapasa inscription commemorates his role as protector and source of welfare to the people of the "capital of Malaya" (*Malaya-pura-hitarthah*) and his power as an embodiment of Amoghapasa. The inscription praises Yoga, and glorifies a god called Matanganisa, who engages in a mystic dance with his Tara while intoxicated and amorous. The dance takes place amid the songs of birds, humming bees, rutting elephants' trumpeting, the happy cries of *gandharvas*, and the scent of jasmine.

Adityavarman left many inscriptions which show his devotion to esoteric Buddhism. An enormous statue unearthed near Padang Roco depicts a man with eyes bulging in a threatening manner, with snakes for armbands, skull bowl, and sacrificial knife, standing on a pile of corpses and skulls (Figure 7.8). It is possible that this is a depiction of Adityavarman after his initiation to a particular status in esoteric Buddhism.

His last known inscription issued in 1375 says that he was initiated into the rank of Ksetrajna and given the title Visesa Dharani. A similar statue was found in Bahal II at Padang Lawas, along with a statue of Hevajra.<sup>133</sup> Scholars have identified the figure as a female, but it is most likely *Mahakala* (viewers may have been deceived by the image's rather rotund physique). Many statues of Mahakala





**Figure 7.8** Mahakala from Padang Roco

have been found in Buddhist contexts of Sumatra and Java; usually they are misidentified as Bhairava, a Saivite version of the same deity.<sup>134</sup>

Adityavarman's last inscription dated 1375 describes him as seated on a high throne, eating delicacies, drinking, and laughing in the midst of the perfume of myriads of flowers, and the Lord of Suravasa; Saruaso is the modern name of the area including Bandar Bapahat. Inscriptions attributed to him include 24 in Tanah Datar and 17 at Pagarruyung.

Just as there are Old Malay inscriptions in Java, there are Old Javanese inscriptions in Sumatra. It is impossible to discern what these signify, other than that the two islands had close cultural relations, and that at least some people on each island understood the language of the other. It is possible that these texts had political implications (dominance/subordination), but it is also possible that at least some of them were meant for people from one island who lived on the other island, either for short or long periods, and either formed enclaves or lived among speakers of the dominant language. It is dangerous to speculate further about the significance of these inscriptions without more archaeological evidence on their context.<sup>135</sup>

There are also "citation inscriptions" (in Peter Skilling's term) from highland west Sumatra. One fragment found at Pulau Sawah bears an esoteric Buddhist text which may date from the tenth century.<sup>136</sup> These are small portable items and could have been brought to this site at any time between the tenth and fourteenth centuries.

Adityavarman's inscriptions as well as folklore suggest that he attempted to introduce a Javanese-style court to highland Sumatra. His experiment does not seem to have succeeded. No inscriptions or esoteric Buddhist statuary were produced after 1375. Legends depict wars between an autocrat and an advocate of a more consultative system. The two forms of customary law still exist in the Minangkabau area of west Sumatra today.

## CLASSIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE WEST SUMATRAN HIGHLANDS

Several important sites are found near the confluence of the Pingian and the Batanghari, including Padang Roco, Pulau Sawah, and Sungai Langsat. The Mahakala – statue 4.41 meters high and weighing four tons – found here is the largest statue ever found in Indonesia. People in the mountains may have met here to exchange forest products such as ivory, gold, and incense with people from the lowlands. Padang Roco was heir to the Buddhist culture of Muara Jambi. A *Prajñāpāramitā* statue in Singhasari style found at Muara Jambi indicates that the site might not have been entirely abandoned, but few imported ceramics of that period have been discovered there, whereas Song-Yuan ceramics have been found in the Padang Roco region.<sup>137</sup>

The base of the Amoghapasa statue was found 7 kilometers away from the statue itself. Either Adityavarman moved the statue base upriver to Padang Roco, or took the statue downriver to Rambahan.

Archaeological research in the 1990s revealed the existence of numerous previously undiscovered remains around Padang Roco. An ancient moat connected to the river protected the site. Surface finds include Chinese ceramics from the Song and Ming period (twelfth to sixteenth centuries). A complex

of brick sanctuaries has also been discovered and excavated there; evidence of several phases of construction together with Chinese sherds of different dynasties indicates that the site was in use for a long period. Excavations at Pulau Sawah from 1991 to 1994 located nine mounds which probably represent ancient ceremonial structures. Another shrine at Bukik Awang Maombiak, across the river from Pulau Sawah, and a stone makara of eleventh- to thirteenth-century style, was also found here.

From Padang Roco, Adityavarman transferred his ceremonial center 120 kilometers north, to Tanahdatar (“Flat Land”). This site is more easily accessible to the west coast of Sumatra; some<sup>138</sup> have speculated that Indian traders preferred the west coast to the Melaka Straits at this period, but no ancient ports on the west Sumatran coast south of Barus have been proven to exist. Systematic excavations at Bukit Gombak, which it was thought might have been the site of Adityavarman’s palace, revealed several sites with Chinese, Vietnamese, and Thai ceramics from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The finds confirm that the site was occupied by people of elite social status during this period.<sup>139</sup>

An inscription dated 1347 found at Tanahdatar mentions Adityavarman’s *patih*, or chief minister, who “acquired riches and gold”, and expresses the wish that he “enjoy the treasure which he has amassed for himself by his conduct on the warrior’s path of the Ksvatriyas”.<sup>140</sup> Traditional authorities in the area derived their status from control over gold and iron smelting. Historical and traditional sources on the socioeconomy and geography of the routes along which gold moved from the Tanahdatar region to the coasts underline the socioeconomic importance of iron working in the west Sumatran highlands.<sup>141</sup> It is important to distinguish between ownership of gold mines and control of gold transport. The west Sumatran rulers do not seem to have been involved in gold extraction, which was carried out by local chiefs. The king probably focused on controlling transport and security for porters. Caravans of the colonial period consisted of 100 or more men, each carrying 20 to 25 kilograms.<sup>142</sup>

The role of the Sumatran highlands in the development of socioeconomic complexity has been underestimated. Archaeological evidence demonstrates the existence of important ceremonial sites along much of the eastern slope of the Barisan Mountain chain. Further investigation of transport routes will probably demonstrate the balanced relationship between highland and lowland groups in the Classic period.

### A LEGAL CODE FROM KERINCI<sup>143</sup>

The *Nītisārasamuccaya* is a recently discovered manuscript written around the time of Adityavarman’s reign, quite possibly between 1347 and 1374, in or for Kerinci, an important area in the west Sumatran highlands in the Jambi hinterland, but the laws in it were probably meant to apply to a wider area. Not all the situations and conditions described or implied in the legal code existed in Kerinci.

The text contains a reference to a minister (*dipati*) in an audience hall in “the land of Palimbang” who was in the presence of the *Paduka Sri Maharaja Drammasraya*. Where was “the land of Palimbang” (*bumi palimbang*)? The term probably meant an area, not a settlement. The paper used for this manuscript may have come from Java; perhaps Adityavarman brought it when he moved to Sumatra. Crimes described in the text include falsification of weights; theft of goats, pigs, dogs, chickens, cloth,

rice, sugar cane, pots, taro, eggs (punishment for which includes having one's face rubbed with chicken dung), alcoholic palm wine, fishing nets, tin, the contents of a trap, and iron; borrowing someone's boat and not returning it; burning someone's garden shed; making uncorroborated accusations; disobedience to authority; fighting and killing; repayment of debts; and sexual offences. The text implies the existence of at least four social levels (slaves, commoners, officials, and royalty). These characteristics seem to fit a society with a fairly complex social structure but an agrarian lifestyle.

## Padang Lawas

Activity at some sites in Padang Lawas sites from the Middle Classic continued in the Late Classic period. The type of religion practiced there was very similar to that of Adityavarman, but there is no evidence that his political role extended that far north. Inscriptions in a special type of script probably carved in the thirteenth or fourteenth century which may be ancestral to that used in the Lake Toba region today appear at the Si Topayan site. Some inscribed pieces of gold foil which may have formed part of consecration deposits include quotes from the *Hevajra tantra* which are probably related to the statue of Heruka found at Bahal II.<sup>144</sup>

## TRAN DYNASTY AND CHAMPA

The Tran dynasty ruled Dai Viet between 1225 and 1400. Its rulers secured their control of the throne first through marriage alliances and then by overthrowing the previous dynasty, the Ly.<sup>145</sup> Thai Tong, first king of the Tran dynasty, was the nephew of Tran Thu Do (1194–1264), a strongman who took control of the capital at Thang Long in the 1220s. The Tran stronghold was Tuc Mac in the lower Red River Delta,<sup>146</sup> to which their Chinese ancestors had migrated in the early twelfth century.

They reorganized 61 administrative units often correlated with specialized occupations into two sections: Left and Right. The urban center began to expand beyond the walls of Thang Long. The Tran introduced the concept of the Senior King, or *Thai Thuong Hoang*, similar to Classic Indonesia. Senior kings abdicated but continued to advise new kings.<sup>147</sup> One chronicle mentions two palaces: the eastern palace for the young king and the northern palace for the king's father, the Senior Ruler.

Tuc Mac continued to function as the base for the Tran family from which Thu Do oversaw many operations. The eastern center became the secondary capital of Dai Viet under the Tran rulers, much like the Chinese practice of having two capitals during the Tang and Song dynasties. From Tuc Mac (renamed Thien Truong, "Heavenly Capital") where the Senior Ruler resided, the Tran clan controlled a network of princes in the countryside. The Young King conducted state affairs and performed royal ceremonies in Thang Long. Control over the two capitals was symbolically important: kings had to alternate between Thang Long and Thien Truong if there was no Senior Ruler.

Excavations at the royal court of Thien Truong have revealed artifacts ranging from terracotta dragon heads and lotus-shaped column supports to roof and floor tiles, reflecting strong Chinese influence.

Glazed pottery sherds were also recovered, one of which bore the inscription “Made in Thien Truong”, indicating that a complex of kiln sites continued this industry from earlier periods.

The early Tran kings continued many religious practices of the Ly dynasty, including sponsorship of Buddhist structures and monastic and lay communities. Monks served in the administration of the early Tran rulers, but this changed after the Mongol invasions. In the post-Mongol invasion period the literati assumed administrative positions which had previously been occupied by monks. Chinese-style civil service examinations were conducted, and the Royal Academy and Confucian Temple began to assume more importance.<sup>148</sup>

The removal of monks from administrative roles did not lead to the termination of Buddhist practices in Hanoi, but there were changes, especially in terms of the medium used for religious art. Ly Buddhist iconography continued in Tran art, but fewer stone objects were produced and wood carving became more common.<sup>149</sup>

### **Mongol invasions between 1257 and 1288**

The Mongols attacked Thang Long in 1258, 1285, and 1288. Although Dai Viet repelled the Mongols, Thang Long was razed, and the Vietnamese suffered major losses in population and property. One of these was associated with Kublai Khan’s expedition to punish the Cham king for not going to the Mongol court in person to offer his submission. The Tran king refused to grant permission for the Mongols to cross Dai Viet.<sup>150</sup> Two invasions took place during the reign of Tran Nhan Tong (reigned 1278–93), who wrote a letter to Kublai Khan describing the death and destruction the Mongol armies wrought on Dai Viet, vividly recounting the brutality of the soldiers, and the desecration of sacred sites. Nhan Tong rebuilt the Thang Long citadel sometime between 1291 and 1293.<sup>151</sup>

The Vietnamese began to focus on the development of military technology. One example was a new type of watercraft which was light, manoeuvrable, and fast, and able to hold thrice the number of oarsmen.<sup>152</sup> The search for better military technology also led to the creation of paper currency at about the same time that this medium was coming into use in China. The founder of the succeeding Ho dynasty, Tran Thieu De’s uncle, replaced copper cash with paper money<sup>153</sup> with motifs of pondweed, clouds, tortoises, dragons, phoenix, etc.<sup>154</sup> This made it possible to conserve copper for firearms.

### **Cham invasions of the late fourteenth century**

In 1361, Champa began a three-decade-long series of invasions against Dai Viet. The regime began to decline during the reign of Tran Du Tong (1341–1369). The capital fell to the Chams in 1371, 1377, and finally in 1383, when the Cham occupied Thang Long for six months. Six years later, rebellion in Dai Viet provided another opportunity for the Chams to attack, but the 1389 invasion failed when the Cham king Che Bong Nga was killed with the help of a Cham defector who identified Che Bong Nga’s ship. This victory is perceived as a major turning point in Vietnamese-Cham relations: Power shifted

decisively to Dai Viet. The Ming invasion in the first decade of the fifteenth century overthrew the Tran and the short-lived Ho dynasties and heralded another period of Chinese occupation.<sup>155</sup>

The Mongol, Cham, and Ming invasions destroyed important sites, buildings, artifacts, and archives from the Middle and Late Classic. While the extant remains indicate some evolution, continuity of art and architecture from early periods of Sinification were more prominent. The dearth of architectural and sculptural remains limits our view of the Tran dynasty. The creativity of the period is suggested by artifacts such as metal inlay and gold inlaid ceramics. Further archaeological research will shed more light on the activities and habitation patterns of Thang Long and Tuc Mac (Thien Truong) and the areas linked to these urban centers.

### Technology and industry during the Tran period

Industrial activities were central to the development of Tran urbanism. Two important industries in Tran dynasty Dai Viet were ceramic production and metal working. Though production technology remained the same, the techniques, shapes, and decoration of Tran ceramics changed. The cruder products of the Tran may reflect the unstable political and social situation resulting from Mongol and Cham invasions. Archaeological excavations at Ba Dinh suggested that ceramic production constituted a major activity: a great number of dishes and kiln wasters were found, but no kiln remains.

The *Vietnamese Annals* refer to Bat Trang, on the left bank of the Red River across from Hanoi, which produced ceramics in the fourteenth century, including floor tiles “as strong as iron”, and engaged in pottery production all year round unlike other areas where pottery making was seasonal, with farming as a second occupation. Family genealogies suggest that potters migrated to the village in the Ly dynasty. In the delta, numerous pottery communities developed at places such as Kiep Bac and Phu Lang.<sup>156</sup> Vietnamese records mention tribute to Ming China comprising textiles and 70 sets of bowls and plates from Bat Trang.<sup>157</sup>

Vietnamese ceramics made during this period appropriated techniques and decorative motifs from the previous periods. In particular, celadon continued to be a favourite and the ewer form which first appeared in the Ly dynasty began to assume more varied forms. Previously undecorated vessel types began to be decorated utilizing brushwork and painted motifs either in iron brown or cobalt blue. The Tran period also witnessed the increasing usage of moulding after 1287, probably as a result of Chinese influence. Moulded decorations include floral patterns such as lotus flowers and chrysanthemum, little children among foliage, and Daoist and Buddhist designs. These motifs were also commonly found in Chinese porcelains of the Yuan and Ming dynasties.<sup>158</sup> Tran potters also produced new forms of vessels such as double-gourd ewers, lotus-bud beakers, tea bowls, and *yuhuchun*-type ware. Ceramics with inlaid gold also entered the repertoire of wares produced during this period. Vietnamese ceramics were made for export during the second century of the Tran period, which coincided with Ming restrictions on private trade. Tran ceramics have been recovered from sites in Japan, the Philippines, and Indonesia.<sup>159</sup>

Metalworking flourished during the Tran dynasty. Tran bronze smiths continued to cast bronzes using the same techniques utilized during the Ly dynasty and producing large-sized objects, such as a



vast cauldron housed at the Pho Minh Pagoda which measures 10 meters by 4 meters.<sup>160</sup> Metal objects or artifacts with metal inlays are also described in tribute records. A list of tribute sent in 1260 included wooden boxes with inlaid gold, golden boxes in the shapes of lotus leaves and melons, and a rhinoceros horn inlaid with gold and silver. Tribute in later years included golden pots, jewellery, and even a golden bust in the form of the Tran ruler, Tran Nhan Tong. Weapons produced during this period include an 83.4-centimeter-long metal sword excavated from the Tran layer at Ba Dinh.<sup>161</sup>

## BUDDHIST ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND ICONOGRAPHY

Tran architecture is characterized by a preference for complexes rather than single structures. Another characteristic which differentiates Tran architecture from Ly relates to the locations where the temples were built. Most Ly-period pagodas are located in the Red River Delta, whereas Tran pagodas are found along the coast and in the highlands.

Tran architecture integrated multi-storeyed towers in temple complexes. Towers had been a common architectural feature in the Ly dynasty, but they were normally stand-alone structures, unlike the Tran ones, which formed parts of ensembles. Two prime examples of Tran towers are the Binh Son Tower in Vinh Phuc and Pho Minh.

Dragon motifs were prominent on the Pho Minh pagoda, which is dated to 1262. The pagoda underwent several periods of renovation, the latest dating to the nineteenth century. The Pho Minh Tower, which forms an integral part of the complex, was probably erected between 1305 and 1310 and is believed to be the repository for the remains of the third Tran king, Tran Nhan Tong. The significance of towers to the Tran rulers is further demonstrated by discoveries of model towers made of terracotta and glazed stoneware. The intricate details found on these model towers provide good examples for the built forms. The architectural and artistic elements on these model towers also indicate that the architectural complexes were neither strictly Buddhist nor Hindu nor Daoist, but were syncretic mixes of different religious systems.

Other Tran structures comprised the Dau and Thai Lac pagodas. The Dau pagoda has stone sculptures of the *con sau* while the Thai Lac pagoda possesses wooden panels bearing intricate decorations of dragons and flaming pearls, *kinnaras*, and deities astride phoenixes. Another pictorial convention, which represents an example of continuity from the Ly dynasty, is the depiction of a boy child wearing a pleated garment. The gaps in the panel are decorated with cloud patterns, waves, and sacred fungi. The dragon decorations are found on a four-leaf wooden door, which was moved to the Vietnam National Museum of History. Inscriptions found in the vicinity indicate that the Tran-dynasty pagoda was constructed on the site of a previous religious building from the Ly period.<sup>162</sup>

Following the Mongol invasions of the second half of the thirteenth century, more structures, especially Buddhist ones, were erected. This flurry of religious activity stemmed from the growing popularity of the Truc Lam sect led by the charismatic Phap Loa (1284–1330). Phap Loa was able to obtain the support of the Tran royal clan and other noble families. Their donations provided the charismatic leader with funds to carry out construction projects such as the 1314 complex at Bao An, which consisted of 33

structures, including a Buddhist sanctuary, monasteries, and libraries. Phap Loa also attracted a large following of disciples and lay supporters, many of whom built pagodas and towers. Inscriptions described the production of bronze, wood, and terracotta statues, but only three examples survived. These were found at the Lam pagoda in Quang Ninh; they were headless and probably depict Amitabha, Avalokitesvara, and Mahasthamaprabhata. No others survived, probably as a result of the destruction caused by the Cham invasions of the late fourteenth century. Two other sculptures had also been associated with Phap Loa: a large statue of Maitreya believed to have been cast in 1327 and a 32-centimeter-tall statue of an infant Buddha emerging from a lotus.

This period when Phap Loa and the Truc Lam sect were prominent has also been characterized as the transition to Vietnamese Buddhism. In *Tam to thuc luc*, a text which Phap Loa purportedly wrote, statues representing the three existences, Amitabha, Sakyamuni, and Maitreya, were described. An inscription found at the Dai Bi pagoda on Mount Van Loi mentions a gold Quan Am statue with multiple arms and eyes. This more esoteric Quan Am is considered to be a characteristic of transition to Vietnamese Buddhism.

Cham influence can also be detected in stone plinths found in various pagodas on both sides of the Red River. The plinths have been dated to the second half of the fourteenth century; many bear dates from 1364 to 1394, the period of the Cham invasions. The corners are sculpted *garudas* holding a pearl in the palm of one uplifted hand. The *garuda* motif is not new; it had been introduced during the Ly dynasty. However, *garuda* motifs were never found on stone plinths in the Ly period. Nguyen-Long argues that the *garuda* plinths were the product of Cham prisoners.<sup>163</sup> Other than the invasion of 1383 during which the Cham occupied Thang Long for six months, it would appear that the Chams did not linger long in the area, although it is possible that, even during conflict, artistic influences could indicate the work of either Cham artisans who were brought back as prisoners of war or descendants of individuals who became involved in the pagodas and had no connections with the Cham prisoners or invaders.

## CHAMPA

At the end of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the main polities in Champa were Indrapura (Quang Binh, Quang Tri, and Thua Thien), Amaravati (Quang Nam and Quang Ngai), Vijaya (Binh Dinh), Kauthara (Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa), and Panduranga (Ninh Thuan). Whitmore discusses the nature of polities in what he termed “Nagara Champa”, comprising the four main areas represented by the just-mentioned polities and other regions such as the northern area, which was Vietnamese; Nghe Thanh, the southern Khmer area characterized as “Kampuchea Krom” (lower Cambodia); and the highlands, an important zone consisting of diverse groups of people. He noted the importance of topography in the geopolitical dynamics of the Cham *mandalas*. Most research in Vietnam has emphasized the importance of the Red River Delta or the coastal polities, but the highlands have been neglected, as has the fact that highland societies can exercise hegemony over lowland groups. Recognition of the impact of mountainous terrain on Champa and on climate allows for a better understanding of the distribution of centers and polities in Champa from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries.<sup>164</sup>

By the 1220s, Khmer supremacy over Champa had ceased and power was restored in Vijaya, which replaced Amaravati. The new ruler was Jaya Paramesvaravarman II, whose reign ended in the 1240s. He conducted a ceremony reinstating all the *linggas* of the south and the north. He provided a *kosa* cover for each *lingga*, effectively reactivating the cults. Inscriptions from My Son (Amaravati), Po Nagar (Kauthara), and Cho Dinh (Panduranga) bear descriptions of these ceremonies.<sup>165</sup> Cham and Chinese sources described the royal figure as dressed in gold and adorned with jewellery such as a diadem, necklace, and earrings, etc.<sup>166</sup>

The southward movement of the Cham political center from Amaravati to Vijaya appears to have begun in the eleventh century. Rather than the conventional view that the shift took place to avoid the expansion of Vietnamese power, Whitmore suggests that the move was undertaken to tap more efficiently the maritime trade network. The shift also allowed the Cham center to gain better access to the highlands and their products.<sup>167</sup> During the fourteenth century, Champa also became increasingly involved in trade with Java. Cham ports, including Thi Nai in Vijaya, were important hubs connecting China and Java.

The last Sanskrit inscription was produced in Champa in 1253. This date also marked the beginning of the decline of Cham political and cultural control over Nagara Champa. The Cham king known as Che Man in Vietnamese records ascended the throne in 1285 and assumed the title Jaya Singhavarman III. The king, presumably an ally of the Javanese ruler Kertanagara, was credited with stopping the Mongol fleet from calling in Champa on its way to Java. His consorts included a Javanese princess and the sister of the Dai Viet king, Tran Ahn Tong. Che Man constructed the Po Klong Garai temple at Phan Rang. When he died in 1307, Che Chi assumed the title Jaya Singhavarman IV. During the reign of Che Chi, Dai Viet invaded and captured the Cham king, who died in captivity in Tonkin. Subsequent Cham rulers failed in their resistance against Dai Viet, and at least two elite members, Che Chi's brother and a Cham prince, went into exile in Java.<sup>168</sup>

Later Cham kings were able to resist Dai Viet, especially the last king, Che Bong Nga. He rose to become the ruler in 1360 despite his vague origins. In 1369 the new Ming dynasty recognized Che Bong Nga's leadership. He was engaged in continuous wars with Dai Viet and was victorious on several occasions. He invaded Vietnam three times. The first was in 1371 when he sacked Hanoi, exploiting factionalism which had developed in the Dai Viet court. In 1377 he first fended off a Vietnamese invasion, then counterattacked and sacked Hanoi, and finally in 1390 he invaded Thang Long. However, the king was killed when a turncoat provided intelligence on Che Bong Nga's ship. In a turn of events typical of Seasian warfare, the Chams gave up the attack once their leader was killed.<sup>169</sup> Following his death, a general usurped power from Che Bong Nga's sons.

During the early fifteenth century, Champa sent 18 missions to China, more than other contemporary polities such as Cambodia, which sent seven; Java with 17; and Melaka with 12. By the middle of the fifteenth century, Champa was much weakened, especially after the loss of the capital Vijaya in 1446 to the Vietnamese. The Chams were able to retake the capital but could not hold on to it, losing it again in 1471. The Vietnamese invasions resulted in severe depopulation of Vijaya: 60,000 people were killed and 30,000 individuals taken back to Vietnam. The prisoners of war included members of the royal family. This event signified the beginning of the end of Champa's viability. Fifteenth-century Champa

was unable to exercise control characteristic of Che Bong Nga's time<sup>170</sup> or to compete with Dai Viet. The Kauthara mandala was finally extinguished in 1653. Panduranga persisted until it was absorbed by Vietnam in 1832.

## Cham architecture

The move of the Cham capital from Indrapura to Vijaya coincided with the beginning of Binh Dinh style, which characterized Cham architecture between 1150 and 1200. The brief period of Khmer occupation of Vijaya between 1203 and 1220 led to Khmer influence on Cham structures<sup>171</sup> such as a tiered pyramid on terraces faced with bricks in Banh It temple. Other examples of Cham temples bearing Khmer influence are Canh Tien, Thoc Loc, and Duong Long.<sup>172</sup>

Po Klong Garai can be dated to the thirteenth century on stylistic and epigraphic evidence. A Cham king constructed several temples in the vicinity in 1226. The central tower in the Po Klong Garai was the last structure to be constructed on the site in 1300. Inscriptions carved on the exterior and interior door jambs recorded the genealogy of the Cham king Jaya Singhavarman or Che Man (reigned 1292–1307). The temple is Saivite and has a three-tiered roof and superstructures decorated with pediments containing figures such as a meditating hermit and a dancing Siva on the east pediment. In the vestibule is a *Nandi*, or bull, mount of Siva facing a *mukha lingga* (phallic symbol with an anthropomorphic face or head).<sup>173</sup>

## Cham kilns

Central Vietnam was home to five ceramic production sites: Go Sanh, Truong Cuu, Cay Me, Go Hoi, and Go Ke. These centers are all located along the Con River west of Binh Dinh.<sup>174</sup> Of these five complexes, two—Go Sanh and Go Hoi—were archaeologically excavated. The other three kiln sites yielded surface finds. A total of 20 kilns have been identified in Go Sanh, but only two have been excavated. The kilns were rebuilt several times, indicating a fairly long span of use. At the Go Hoi kiln complex, the potters used firing supports with spurs or small projections on rings placed in the center of ceramics to allow them to be stacked one on top of another.<sup>175</sup> The use of such kiln furniture is a sign of mass production techniques; variation in the types of kiln supports is indicative of local evolution in ceramic practice.

Tests such as instrumental neutron activation analysis applied to ceramics from the kiln sites revealed that the Cham potters utilized clay from different sources.<sup>176</sup> This fact also suggests a more complex production process. The Cham were the only Malayo-Polynesians to adopt kiln technology. This is another example of probable technology transfer among Seasians (the Cham may have observed either Khmer or Vietnamese kilns in operation), but the process was not straightforward since they did not reproduce precisely the ceramic procedure of any other Seasian group.

The diversity of sherds found at the five production kilns revealed a complex repertoire of glazed and unglazed ceramics and architectural objects. The identification of certain ceramic types in production sites enables the identification of certain ceramics such as particular types of brown-glazed stoneware jars as products of Vijaya. Stoneware jars decorated with moulded motifs formed part of a complex category of ceramics now referred to as Binh Dinh ceramics or Vijaya trade wares. This detailed knowledge of production sites made it possible to identify them when they were found in northern Borneo and the Philippines, including shipwrecks such as the Pandanan. Binh Dinh trade wares included bowls, cups, bottles, dishes, large basins, *kendis*, and pots.<sup>177</sup> The ceramic evidence demonstrates the degree to which Vijaya was integrated to the maritime trade network of the fifteenth century.

### End of the Tran dynasty

The Mongol invasions of the 1280s resulted in consolidation of power among the princes or overlords of regional mandalas. Tran Ming Tong (reigned 1314–1357) attempted to re-center power in Thang Long but switched from Buddhist Thien ideology to classic Confucian. He established a Royal Study Hall and placed more classic literati in key government positions. As a result, the Tran royal elite failed to maintain centralized control over Dai Viet. Thang Long's disarray invited Cham invasions. In 1390 the Cham drove both the king and the senior ruler out of Thang Long and Thien Truong. The duo spent four years (1383–1387) taking refuge in the hills north of Thang Long.<sup>178</sup>

The Tran kingdom kept Chinese-style annals (*Dai Viet su ky*), an important source of information on internal politics and inter-polity relations, including items sent as tribute to China. The dynasty survived for 175 years until Ho Quy Ly usurped the throne from his five-year-old grandson, Thieu De.

### BARUS, ACEH, BRUNEI

Chronicles from Aceh at the northern tip of Sumatra record attacks from Majapahit, but Barus does not appear to have been incorporated into the Javanese mandala. The Late Classic at Barus is represented by the site of Bukit Hasang, where the oldest Muslim tombstone is dated 1370. Chinese ceramics from the site span the period from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries. The Barus site, Kedai Gadang, was occupied from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries; most of the imported ceramics date from the late thirteenth to early fifteenth centuries.<sup>179</sup>

Yuan and Ming pottery with cobalt blue decoration was present but rare at Bukit Hasang. A large proportion of the Chinese pottery consisted of stoneware jars, including small-mouth bottles of a type common in the Late Classic. Only 23 Chinese coins were found at Barus, of which 10 had legible characters: eight of the Northern Song, and two from the Southern Song. This is not very different from Muara Jambi; only nine coins of the Tang and Song have been reported, all from Candi Gedong 1. This contrasts with Kota Cina, where about 1,000 coins have been found.<sup>180</sup>

Possible comparisons with contemporary sites in the Malay world are unfortunately difficult, partly because of a lack of properly excavated habitation sites, partly because pottery is neglected or only superficially mentioned in the publications compared with other types of artifacts, such as imported stoneware and porcelain.<sup>181</sup>

Although the forms of local earthenware at Bukit Hasang are broadly similar to those from Kota Cina, the profiles and preferences for decorative techniques are different. Incising was the favoured decorative technique at Bukit Hasang, whereas stamped décor is the principal technique used at Kota Cina and other sites along the Straits of Melaka. Kendis are rare at Bukit Hasang, common at Kota Cina and Bujang in Kedah. The pottery from Padang Lawas is distinct from both Barus and Kota Cina. Variation in pottery from the Straits of Melaka region remains to be identified and explored.

There is no evidence of pottery making at Barus; thus Perret uses the term “Southeast Asian pottery” in lieu of “local pottery”.<sup>182</sup> He assigns a large proportion of the earthenware to the Indo-Persian area rather than Seasia, but this must be considered a provisional hypothesis rather than a conclusion because no petrographic analyses have yet been conducted on the ceramics. The same is true of Kota Cina. Miksic and Yap<sup>183</sup> believe the common type of red-slipped carinated earthenware used for cooking vessels was mostly made locally, but Edwards McKinnon noted “very strong similarities with the pottery of South India, particularly the carinated pots with red paste”.<sup>184</sup> Perret refers to these as “types of pottery from Bukit Hasang considered as originating from South Asia”.

The typology of earthenwares from Bukit Hasang is exemplary, but the attribution of cooking pots found in much of the Malay world to India needs to be verified. Similarities between them can be due partly to a common function, partly to communication, which could have gone either way. The old tendency to prefer diffusion from India to independent invention in Seasia or even Seasian influence on India without concrete evidence should be resisted.

A zone of dense Classic-period population ran along a 300-kilometer-long strip of flat lowland along the north coast of Sumatra. The *Desavarnana* of 1365 mentions a number of places here: Tamiang, Perlak, Samudra, and Lamuri, in addition to Barus and Barat, down the west coast. The *Ying-ya Sheng-lan* in the fifteenth century mentioned Samudera and Lamuri besides Aru. The most likely candidates for early upper-tier settlements lay near the western extremity of this strip.

### Aceh: Lambri

The name “Lambri” occurs in many variants in Arabic, Chinese, Indian, Persian, and European texts from circa 850 to 1515. It was at the northwestern tip of Sumatra, on the way to Barus. It is listed as Ilâmuridešam, one of the ports of Srivijaya conquered by the Chola kingdom. Lambri seems to have moved into the Tamil mandala at that time. A trade guild inscription of circa 1200 found at Vishakhapatnam mentions a merchant from Pasai/Pasay who was a member of the Anjuvannam trade guild.<sup>185</sup> Another dated 1204 near Nagapattinam refers to a gift from a Pasai merchant to a local temple. An inscription from Neusu, northwest Aceh, which is similar to one found in Quanzhou dated 1281, shows that a Tamil trading guild was still active there in the twelfth or thirteenth century.<sup>186</sup>



Chinese became frequent visitors to the port in the Late Classic period. In 1225 Zhao Rugua said Nanwuli (Lambri) paid tribute to Sanfoqi. Ships coming from Quanzhou spent months there waiting for the eastern monsoon. In 1292 a mission was sent to Nanwuli to demand its submission. In the same year Marco Polo noted that the kingdom acknowledged it was subject to “the Great Kaan”, that is, Kublai. Odoric of Pordenone said that it was an international port where camphor and gold were available. He also records that Lambri often fought with its neighbour Samudera/Pasai. Wang Dayuan in 1349 compared Lambri to Temasik as pirate lairs. He called Lambri an important trade center but it did not have a compact center; he said “The natives live all over the hills.”<sup>187</sup>

The *Desavarnana* claimed Lambri as one of Majapahit’s dependencies. Zheng He’s fleet visited Lambri in 1414 and 1430; the *Ying-ya Sheng-lan* gives an estimated population of 1,000 families, all Muslim.<sup>188</sup> If the population of the most important of the “cities” of north Sumatra in the early second millennium reached only 1,000 or so families, then physical remains of this and other contemporary “urban” centers of the region may not be extensive, except for foreign enclaves such as Kota Cina. Portuguese reports still mention Lambri in 1511–1515,<sup>189</sup> but a new royal trading center called Aceh, a few kilometers farther east, soon replaced it.

E. Edwards McKinnon discovered the probable site of Lambri in 1985 when he observed sherds of Chinese porcelain of the Song-Yuan period, fifteenth-century Sawankhalok and Vietnamese wares, earthenware, and mollusc shells, exposed through wave action along a beach 5 kilometers west of Banda Aceh, in an area now called Lambaro. Even Islamic tombstones and building foundations are now under water.<sup>190</sup> The rapid subsidence of northwest Sumatra is rapidly taking with it archaeological sites containing important information on early Sumatran urbanization.

### Samudera-Pasai

In the late thirteenth century, Islam gained a strong foothold in Aceh. The earliest confirmed Southeast Asian Muslim ruler was Malik al-Salih, who ruled at Samudera-Pasai. These two ports had originally been rivals, but were eventually united. According to the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, a local chronicle written in the late fourteenth century with fifteenth-century additions, the Sharif of Mekah ordered Shaikh Isma’il to go to Pasai to convert the ruler, whose name was Merah Silu. Merah Silu had a dream in which the Prophet Muhammad taught him the *shahadah* and foretold the arrival of Shaikh Isma’il. Merah Silu then took the title *Malik al-Salih*. It was probably for him that the gravestone dated 1297 was carved. Sultan Maliku’s-Saleh was buried near his palace in the *kota* of Samudera. No archaeological remains of a densely inhabited port have yet been found in the Samudera-Pasai area. Polo spent several months at this port in 1292. He did not describe a local settlement, only a moated and ramparted encampment, including five wooden towers which his Chinese comrades erected to protect themselves against attacks.<sup>191</sup> He described the palm wine here as the best drink ever invented. The same detachment of the Yuan fleet which called at Lamuri also stopped at Samudera-Pasai to demand that the port kingdoms submit to China.

**Muslim tombstones of the Late Classic period<sup>192</sup>**

The Muslim custom of carving tombstones introduced a new category of material culture to Seasia. Some tombstones were imported from Cambay in the fifteenth century, and others from Persia, but these are rare and would have been expensive. The people of north Sumatra created an original style (*batu Aceh*, “Aceh stones”) which spread throughout Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula and was used until the late sixteenth century. These tombstones consist of a rectangular vertical box with elaborate Islamic calligraphy on two panels. The most striking and unique features of the design are wing-like curved projections on the upper sides of the stones; these resemble *kala-makara* motifs found on Classic-period temple doorways, gates, and niches. In Islamic architecture these became wing-like motifs possibly inspired by depictions of Garuda, associated with immortality and therefore the afterlife (Figure 7.9). A list of important early Islamic tombstones of the Late Classic period follows:

- 1264: Brunei: Sinicized Arab or Islamicized Chinese<sup>193</sup>
- 1297: Aceh: Malik al-Salih’s tombstone
- Circa 1300: Brunei sultan’s stone
- 1310: Sulu (southern Philippines)
- 1326: Pasai
- 1350: Pananggahan
- 1355: Aceh
- 1368–69: Tralaya (Java)
- 1370: Bukit Hasang (Barus)
- 1375: Pasai
- 1376: Tralaya
- 1380: Tralaya
- 1380: Minye Tujuh (Aceh)
- 1388: Daya, Aceh
- 1389: Lamreh, Aceh
- 1389: Minye Tujuh, Aceh
- 1397: Barus
- 13?? Bukit Hasang, Barus

Samudera-Pasai swiftly became an important center for the dissemination of Islam. The *Malay Annals* states that the first Muslim ruler of Melaka converted to Islam when he married the Sultan of Pasai’s daughter. Sunan Gunung Jati, one of the nine *wali* credited in folklore with having converted Java to Islam, is said to have come from Pasai.

Historical data for northern Sumatra become moderately abundant in the fourteenth century. Ibn Battuta twice visited Samudera circa 1345–1346, 50 years after Marco Polo, on his way to and from China, and described it as a port with a fertile hinterland, where the valuable commodities of cloves and camphor were for sale. He also saw ships from Pasai in the ports of China. Pasai is, however, missing



**Figure 7.9** Batu Aceh



from the report of Wang Dayuan who was in Southeast Asia around the same time as Ibn Battuta. Perhaps Chinese merchants had not yet become familiar with this area.

The *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* refers to an attack from Majapahit in either 1350 or 1361 as well as Majapahit expeditions against Jambi and Palembang, among other places in Sumatra, confirming and amplifying the *Desavarnana*, which included Pasai in its list of vassals. The *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* describes Majapahit's court, because Samudera-Pasai envoys went there each year to present tribute. The sultanate was one of the busiest commercial centers in the Straits of Melaka, and the rulers seem to have been the major beneficiaries of the trade. They had commercial connections with several ports in the Indian Ocean, including Gujarat, Bengal, Bago, and Tenasserim, as well as Java and China.

Little archaeological investigation has been done in Aceh, which was long affected by a separatist rebellion. The twin towns probably lay between the rivers now called Krueng Jambö Aye and Krueng Pasei, near Geudong, where tombstones were carved by the fifteenth century. The *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*<sup>194</sup> states that Malik al-Salih was buried near his palace, in the *kota* (citadel/palace/town) of Samudera. The Dutch archaeologist Moquette thought that Pasai was located at a site now called Cot Astana.<sup>195</sup>

Pasai made its own coins of tin and gold; gold dust and silver were also used as media of exchange. The coins made here during the reign of Sultan Muhammad, who died in 1326, were the first Islamic coins made in Southeast Asia. Coins of tin were used for small transactions, while for large ones 18-carat gold coins inscribed *Muhammad Malik az-Zahir* on the obverse, *al-Sultan al-'adil* on the reverse, were issued. Samudera-Pasai gold coins served as an international medium of exchange in island Seasia for the next two centuries. Pasai tin coins circulated in Melaka.

Like Melaka, fifteenth-century Samudera was an important base for Chinese fleets during the voyages of Admiral Zheng He. The *Ying-ya Sheng-lan* says Samudera "has no walled city". Chinese envoys called here in 1403 and 1404, and Admiral Zheng He's fleet came in 1405, 1414, and 1430. The *History of the Ming* described Samudera as "a center of intercourse in the western seas". The port's population was 20,000 when the Portuguese arrived in the early sixteenth century. The port's hinterland yielded valuable pepper, camphor, benzoin, and gold dust. The port was also a mart where ceramics, silk, and sandalwood from Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and China were available. The town was destroyed in an attack in 1524 by Ali Mughayat Syah, first sultan of Aceh, who moved its population to his capital.

## BRUNEI

Brunei-like toponyms had existed in north Borneo since the mid-first millennium CE. Poli sent an embassy to China in 630 CE. Poni appeared in Chinese sources around 860 and was used until the seventeenth century. In the Late Classic, Zhao Rugua described Poni as a wealthy place where merchants could obtain camphor and pearls, which may have come originally from Sulu, and more than 100 ships suitable for warfare. Its capital was a city with a wall made of wooden boards, containing more than 10,000 people,<sup>196</sup> placing it in the upper tier of Seasian ports. The ruler was the major figure in the kingdom's trade: He met incoming ships in person and negotiated set prices with foreign merchants before trade could begin.

In the fourteenth century, Brunei was a vassal of Majapahit, referred to in the *Desavarnana* as Burung-eng, which sent camphor to Java as tribute. Poni may have been sacked by people from Sulu around 1369; in 1371, according to Chinese sources, it had declined significantly. By 1405 it had recovered sufficiently to send a mission to the Ming court. The king himself went to China in 1408, but died at Nanjing and was buried nearby. His son, then 14 years old, succeeded him, and received an inscribed stone tablet similar to that granted to Melaka, which was to be placed on a site in Poni known as the Mountain of Lasting Tranquillity Preserving the State.

Poni continued sending embassies to China in the early fifteenth century. One of Brunei's embassies to China requested that China instruct Majapahit to stop extorting tribute of camphor from Brunei, since Brunei was now a vassal of China.

Brunei was one of the earliest places in Seasia where Islam penetrated. A Chinese Muslim tombstone was erected in Brunei in 1264.<sup>197</sup> More Islamic tombstones date from the fifteenth century, including one which bears a date of 1418–1419, and a Sanskrit inscription, but it may have arrived in Brunei at a subsequent date, as ballast. Another stone found near Brunei's modern capital at Bandar Seri Begawan bears an inscription which mentions Maharaja Brunei. It has been argued that the stone was carved around 1300, but this has not been proven since no date appears on the stone itself.<sup>198</sup> The Brunei History Centre has compiled royal genealogies and concluded that the first Sultan of Brunei was named Sultan Muhammad, that he reigned from 1363 to 1402, and that he married a princess of Johor, which at that time may have referred to Temasek (now Singapore).

According to a Portuguese observer, Rui de Brito, in 1514 the ruler of Brunei was still a pagan. Tome Pires, who wrote in 1515, however, says that the king had recently become a Muslim. When Europeans arrived in Brunei in the early sixteenth century, Brunei was again powerful, ruling Sulu through viceroys.

## Archaeology of Brunei

The Kota Batu site has yielded local and imported ceramics from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. The area of the ancient settlement was estimated at 2.5 hectares, quite small. Chinese stonewares comprised 66.5 per cent of the total ceramics collected from one construction project.<sup>199</sup> Another Brunei site, Sungai Lumut, yielded a wider range of artifacts, including stoneware, porcelain, beads and bangles of glass, shell, stone, iron, bronze, and dammar. Thai ceramics of the fifteenth century comprised an estimated 10 per cent of the vessels. Although there are no bones, it was probably a burial ground: Many vessels are relatively complete, except for apparently intentional damage in the form of holes punched in bottoms. The practice of burying the dead with offerings of ceramics and other goods, many of them imported, indicates that the population was not yet Islamicized. The site was abandoned after Spanish attacks in 1580 and 1644.

A great transformation took place in Bornean pottery making in the fourteenth century.<sup>200</sup> Between the Song and late Ming periods, two of six early types of earthenware pottery disappeared, to be replaced by Chinese blue-and-white porcelain. Earthenware was almost entirely extinct on the coast by the fifteenth

century, although it was still used inland. A statistical comparison of ceramics from two sites (Sungai Lumut and Kupang) yielded very different patterns. At Kupang, local ceramics comprised 52.4 per cent of the total assemblage. The site dates mainly from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. At Sungai Lumut, estimated to date from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, only 2.9 per cent (39 sherds) were of local origin. The ceramics here were described as being of lower quality than those of Kupang. Vessel types include cooking pots, *kendi*, and large jars. Sungai Lumut may have been a ceremonial center where pots were buried, but not for burials.<sup>201</sup>

## TEMASIK

The place name Temasik appears in Chinese and Javanese records of the fourteenth century. According to Wang Dayuan, it included two inhabited areas. One, *Longyamen*, “Dragon’s Tooth Strait”, sent a mission to China around 1320 but was a dangerous pirate lair. The other was *Banzu* (from Malay *Pancur*, spring of water), a trading settlement around a hill beside an estuary which is now called the Singapore River. Temasik was not a particularly rich or powerful port, but Wang was very familiar with its topography. He reported in an informal aside in his description of Xian (“Shan”, perhaps Suphanburi in the Chao Phraya Delta) that “a few years ago” (perhaps around 1325) the Xian besieged Temasik, but did not succeed in breaching its defenses. He also recorded that Chinese merchants lived here “side by side with the natives”. This is the only port in Seasia where he hints that a resident Chinese community existed.

The *Desavarnana* listed Temasik as one of Majapahit’s vassals. The *Sululatu’s-salatin*, or “Malay Annals”,<sup>202</sup> describes a prince who appeared miraculously on Seguntang Hill in Palembang (probably an important Buddhist site of the Early Classic), then wandered in search of a place to found a kingdom. Arriving at Temasik he saw a strange animal which inspired him to choose the name Singapura (Lion City) for his mandala.

The name “Singapura” was common in the Classic period. The name was used for a place mentioned in one of the Jataka tales written in India concerning the previous lives of Gautama Buddha. In the fourth century this was the name of the capital of the ancient kingdom of Mathura in India. Also in the fourth century, the name was used for a Cham capital founded at Tra Kieu in Quang Nam. In 607 CE, the name Singapura appeared in the *Sui Shu* as the name of the residence of the king of Red Earth Land, which has tentatively been located in Singgora/Songkhla. Chinese envoys visited this Singapura in 608. Singapura was mentioned in a Khmer inscription of Jayavarman VII in the late twelfth century as a place to which he sent a statue as a token of his suzerainty. This place is now called Singburi, a town in Kanchanaburi Province. A kingdom in west Java mentioned in the *Cariosan Prabhu Siliwangi*, a legend about a local hero set in the fifteenth century, is also called Singapura.

The *Malay Annals* states that five kings ruled the place, which was twice attacked by Majapahit. The first was unsuccessful, but the second time the Javanese breached the defenses with the help of a treasonous prime minister. The king, however, escaped and a few years later founded Melaka. This king, Iskandar Shah, is a historical personage whose existence is confirmed by the *Ming Annals*. Singapore’s



mythical founder set up his kingdom on Temasik around 1300, while Iskandar Shah evacuated the island around 1395. Singapore continued to exist in the Postclassic as Melaka's naval base and an international port.

Archaeological excavations have succeeded in uncovering many remains of occupation from the Late Classic and Postclassic, including a wide range of earthenware, Chinese porcelain, stoneware, glass, coins, and gold jewellery. Some of the Chinese objects are of elaborate types unknown from other sites, attesting a close connection between the inhabitants of the site and China.<sup>203</sup>

Numerous brick ruins, probably Buddhist candis, were visible on the hill now known as Fort Caning when the British arrived in 1819. A large inscription once stood at the mouth of the Singapore River written in a Palaeosumatran script palaeographically dated to the period between the ninth and fourteenth centuries. An earthen rampart a kilometer long protected the ancient settlement's northeastern flank.

The ancient city occupied about 85 hectares, of which about 10 hectares were occupied by the palace complex. The rest of the site was densely inhabited. Chinese coins were used as currency. Local inhabitants worked copper and bronze, gold and glass, and made pottery.

The Brunei History Centre has compiled royal genealogies and concluded that the first Sultan of Brunei, Sultan Muhammad, reigned from 1363 to 1402, and that he married a princess of Johor, which at that time may have referred to Temasik. It is quite likely that some of Singapore's inhabitants were Muslims by 1400.

## SUNDA PAJAJARAN

By the thirteenth century, west Java may have again become part of a Sumatran mandala, this time established at Jambi. According to Zhao Rugua, *Sinto* (Sunda) was a vassal of Sanfoqi along with rest of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. Sunda had a deep anchorage, and many people lived along the shore. Pepper grown there was better than that of *Ta-pan* (Tuban, eastern Java). Brigandage was a problem, so few foreign traders called there.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when much of Sumatra became part of Majapahit's mandala, Sunda enjoyed political and cultural autonomy. Sundanese stone sculptures of this period resemble Early Classic rather than Late Classic Java. The site of Cikapundung, northeast of Bandung, yielded 17 Sivaitic statues on a square terrace.<sup>204</sup> One bears a date of 1341. In west Banten, Sivaitic images have been found at numerous sites.

Pajajaran may have existed in the thirteenth century, if it is the same place that Zhao Rugua called *Bai-hua-yuan*.<sup>205</sup> The Batutulis inscription from Bogor is the oldest dated local evidence for the kingdom's existence. The date could conceivably be interpreted as 1133, 1333, 1433, or 1533, but many historians accept the 1333 date,<sup>206</sup> which would fit the statement in the *Pararaton* that Sunda's first ruler was killed in Majapahit's capital as the result of a dispute regarding the marriage of his daughter to King Hayam Wuruk. A local chronicle, *Kidung Sunda*, describes a war between Sunda and Majapahit in 1357, caused by Gajah Mada's decision that the Sundanese princess whom Hayam Wuruk loved could

only be a concubine, not a queen. Neither Sunda nor Pajajaran are mentioned in the *Desavarnana*; perhaps reference to the kingdom was intentionally omitted because of the evil auspices attached to it.<sup>207</sup>

The capital was called Pakuan Pajajaran. Pakuan is sometimes thought to derive from *paku* (“nail”; also a type of plant). *Paku* is used today to refer to the royal dynasties of Surakarta (Pakubuwana) and Yogyakarta (Pakualam), in both cases translated “nail” or “axis of the world”. In east Java, *pakuwon* also meant “quarter of the manors”, where dwelled the local *mantri* (“mandarins”, ministers/elite functionaries) and other members of the upper class, both at Singhasari and at the capital of Majapahit. The word in this context may have been derived not from *paku*, “nail”, but from *kuwu*, “manor”.<sup>208</sup>

### Archaeology of Late Classic west Java

The remains of Pakuan Pajajaran were still visible in 1690 as a rampart of stone and earth, inside which the Batutulis inscription was found, together with statuary and stone foundations.<sup>209</sup> Sir Stamford Raffles, who spent much time in Bogor during his lieutenant governorship from 1811 to 1816, noted that “At Pajajaran, a heap of stones is pointed out as the ruin of the Setingel [Sitinggil, a dais at the front of the palace facing the public square], and numerous lines crossing the country between rivers attest the care with which this position was entrenched.”<sup>210</sup>

By 1911 the stone heaps of 1690 had disappeared, except for a mound of cobbles. A few traces of the wall still remained. A small street called Lawang Saketeng means “gate with leaf doors”; the north gate probably stood nearby. Other districts were known as “inside the east city wall”, “inside the west city wall”, etc. Another place name means “boundary marker of the fort”. Along the western road existed a diversion in the river intended to create a pond, “such as previously was found in all royal residences, and still today [1911] in many regents’ houses”.

Near the Batu Tulis extended a flat piece of ground with two square stone heaps, on each of which stood two irregular stone pillars. At one location stood three statues, one with a paper note stuck in the arm which read, “I ask the respected Batu Tulis for number 183 in the current lottery. From the morning till the evening I ask that this lot may be drawn; if the prize is won, I will fulfill my vow to the respected one.”

At another location, the dike of a river cut through the eastern wall, forming a potential source of water for the palace. Here too lay a *babuyutan*, a holy place, paved with river cobbles, with some standing stones, including a fragment of a Siva Mahadeva.<sup>211</sup>

### ARCHAEOLOGY OF SUNDA: BANTEN GIRANG

Aside from oral reports of the colonial period, little is known of the archaeology of the Late Classic in western Java. The only Late Classic site where systematic research has been carried out in west Java is Banten Girang.<sup>212</sup> This site is located about 30 kilometers upstream on the Banten River. At this river’s mouth the greatest spice-trading port of the Late Postclassic developed. Banten Girang (*girang* means “upstream”) was probably established in the fourteenth century as a fortified post and secondary trading

site by Pakuan Pajajaran. The main port of west Java during this period was probably Sunda Kelapa, now part of Jakarta. Banten Girang continued to be utilized during the fifteenth century, so it spanned the Late Classic and Early Postclassic. The dating of particular parts of the site is difficult to ascertain. It consists of an area of flat land on the western bank of the Banten River, where an artificial trench was dug, probably for protection. An artificial cave was excavated in the bank of the river, perhaps as a royal meditation place. Chinese ceramics of the fourteenth century have been found here, as well as fifteenth-century Vietnamese and Thai wares.

## UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE LATE CLASSIC

Shipwrecks of the Late Classic period have added significantly to our understanding of early Seasian trade. No Arab or Indian ships of this period have been found. All identifiable ships with one exception are of Seasian construction. The exception is a ship probably made in China.

### *Pulau Buaya*

Pulau Buaya lies in the Riau Archipelago, approximately 100 kilometers south of Singapore. The date of the wreck cannot be specified; it was probably in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. No remains of the ship itself were recorded, so the origin of the ship itself is unknown. No data regarding the distribution of the cargo or the ship's structure were collected. The salvors recovered 31,000 whole artifacts, which were utilitarian wares rather than luxury items. The rate of breakage of the cargo is unknown; the total cargo may have included 50,000 pieces or more. Most of the ceramics came from Guangdong, with a few representatives of other Chinese kiln sites. The cargo was mainly cheaper wares for sale to the public, not luxury items for delivery to a ruler. Fragments of an earthenware stove of a form widespread in insular Seasia were also recovered.

Southeast Asian ceramics on board consisted of Fine Paste Ware *kendis* similar to examples found in Kota Cina and Singapore, as well as on the Java Sea wreck. Two touchstones for assaying gold, and two dice of black wood with white bone inserts, form additional finds. The dice are quite large, 4 centimeters on a side. "Numerous" tumbler-shaped glasses of blown glass were also noted, as well as some bottles and flasks, probably of Near Eastern origin. Metal objects include ingots of almost pure copper; eight gong-like objects; copper bracelets; stacks of cast iron *woks* (frying pans), and bundles of iron choppers. Also in the cargo were many lead ingots, plus 18 ingots with the Chinese character *guan*, "official", some of which were lead, others tin.<sup>213</sup>

### The Java Sea wreck<sup>214</sup>

In 1996 archaeological investigation of a shipwreck dating from the late thirteenth century off the southeast coast of Sumatra revealed a cargo of at least 30 types of pottery, including Chinese ceramics and Fine

Paste earthenware. Another major consignment consisted of iron *woks* and knives from China, Seasian tree resin (dammar), and ivory. A few fragments of glass may also have been part of the cargo. This range of artifacts is consistent with theories regarding the “peddling nature” of Seasian commerce at this period.

This varied cargo is probably typical of maritime trade during the Late Classic. The mixture of Chinese ceramics and iron with Seasian items indicates that the vessel’s route was typical of “tramp” ships which visited many ports, reacting to opportunities for profit wherever they arose in the South China Sea. The pattern of maritime trade in Late Classic Seasia was probably similar to that in the Mediterranean in the sixteenth century:

Every sailor from captain to cabin-boy would have his bundle of merchandise on board. . . . Amid the buying and selling, care was always taken to call at some port such as Leghorn, Genoa, or Venice, where it was possible to exchange spices, leather, cotton, or local for metal currency. Only the big specialized salt and grain ships had any resemblance to the destination-conscious shipping of today. The others were more like travelling bazaars.<sup>215</sup>

The iron cargo, made up of bundles of iron bars and stacks of cauldrons, weighed approximately 340 tons. Centers of iron smelting were established in numerous places in Fujian during the Song dynasty.<sup>216</sup> The ceramic cargo would have weighed 25 to 30 tons. Small amounts of other miscellaneous objects include 14 scale weights from 10 weight categories indigenous to Indonesia. Bronze figurines include a cross-legged man in the form of a *gana*, or support for some object such as a small altar, and a woman riding a dolphin-like sea creature, probably an allusion to the folktale *Sri Tanjung* which was often portrayed in Late Classic art. There were also two finials (*khakkhara*) that once adorned the wooden staffs of Buddhist monks.

It was estimated that more than 80 per cent of the ceramics in the cargo were broken; 12,000 intact ceramic items were recovered, suggesting a total of 240,000 items in all. The majority were utilitarian wares. High-quality ceramics were also present, including *qingbai*-glazed moulded covered boxes and some very fine *qingbai* dishes from Jingdezhen. Many boxes bore inscriptions on the bases. Porcelain from Longquan, one of the more productive kilns of this period, was conspicuously missing. Some ewers, bowls, lids, and covered boxes are decorated with floral motifs in brown on a cream background, or vice versa, and were originally covered by a transparent green glaze. Unusual stonewares included many storage jars with stamped characters on the shoulders and green-glazed large jars with black decorations. Two bronze gongs found on the Java Sea wreck were the only artifact type not found on the *Intan*.

Hundreds of Fine Paste earthenware *kendis* and bottles of probable peninsular Thai origin suggest that the ship voyaged from China to the Nakhon Si Thammarat or Satingphra area of south Thailand to Sumatra, and was on its way to Java when it sank. Several shapes in this cargo have never been seen before, in particular *kendis* in the form of doughnuts with a spout, neck, and foot. The many *kendi mal-ing* (“thieves’ ewers”) have an opening through which to fill them in the base instead of the neck. Sixteen large ivory elephant tusks and blocks of resin suggest a stop at a port on the east coast of Sumatra.

This site in contrast to Pulau Buaya was excavated as part of a well-designed archaeological research project. The vessel can be dated to the late thirteenth century by stylistic analysis of Chinese porcelain

found on board and radiocarbon dating. The ship is estimated to have been 26 meters long and 8 meters wide. The ship's hull had almost completely disappeared, but enough fragments of wood and possible stone anchors indicate that the ship was made in Seasia, possibly Java.

### **Sabah: The *Jade Dragon* wreck**

A shipwreck found off the north tip of Sabah, Borneo, in 2010 was looted by local fishermen, who destroyed much of the ship. Archaeological investigation managed to ascertain that the ship was Seasian, and carried a specialized cargo consisting almost entirely of green porcelain from the Longquan region of Zhejiang.<sup>217</sup> The ship was relatively small; it may only have carried 1,000 to 2,000 ceramics, plus iron machetes. The wreck can only be dated by the style of the ceramics, which were probably made in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

### ***Tanjong Simpang Mengayau***

The oldest known Chinese-built ship discovered outside of Chinese waters, *Tanjong Simpang Mengayau* was found in the same general area as the *Jade Dragon*. The ship is of Chinese construction, based on nail holes found in the timbers. This site is extremely important for the study of early Chinese maritime trade, but unfortunately it was almost completely destroyed before details of its size, design, and lading could be ascertained. The cargo included *qingbai* porcelain and 61 bronze gongs which lack the raised knob common on most such artifacts. No carbon dates have been obtained. It has been estimated that the ceramics on board were either made in the Northern Song (960–1126) or Southern Song (1127–1279).<sup>218</sup>

### **The breaker shoal wreck**

The breaker shoal shipwreck, found in 1991 near Palawan in the southern Philippines, yielded ingots of lead and iron, Chinese porcelain of the *qingbai* and greenware varieties, and stoneware storage jars including “small-mouth bottles”, otherwise termed “mercury jars”.<sup>219</sup> Fine Paste Ware *kendis* resembling those made in south Thailand indicate that the merchants had commercial contacts with other parts of Seasia, in addition to China.<sup>220</sup>

## **NOTES**

- 1 Gernet 1962: 18.
- 2 Gernet 1962: 56, footnote 13: quoting Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, IV, 268–269.
- 3 See Rowe 1963: 20 for the statement that “the ceremonial center was not a necessary stage in the development of the city”; this refers to Tiwanaku in the Peruvian Andes.

- 4 Askew 1994: 105.
- 5 Phe and Nishimura 1990: 9, note 1.
- 6 von Glahn 2004: 163.
- 7 Lo 1969.
- 8 Rockhill 1914: 422.
- 9 Sen 1996: 257.
- 10 Yang 1985: 28.
- 11 Rockhill 1914: 423.
- 12 Hirth and Rockhill 1911: 156.
- 13 Probably 702 H (Hijrah [Muslim calendar])–1303 CE; Al-Attas 1984.
- 14 Damais 1968–1995.
- 15 Charnvit 1992: 13, 25; quoted in Lieberman 2003: 242.
- 16 Charnvit Kasetsiri 1976: 161.
- 17 Wyatt 1984: 52–53; see also Lieberman 2003: 244.
- 18 Miksic 2007: 311.
- 19 Wyatt 1984: 56.
- 20 Wyatt 1984: 55.
- 21 Woodward 2003: 185.
- 22 Wyatt 1984: 56.
- 23 Woodward 2003: 185.
- 24 Gosling 1991: 29.
- 25 Gosling 1991: 33–37; see also Wyatt 1984: 58.
- 26 Gosling 1991: 31.
- 27 Gosling 1991: 37.
- 28 Wyatt 1984: 59.
- 29 Gosling 1991: 42.
- 30 Gosling 1991: 37; Wyatt 1984: 54; Sud Chonchirdsin 2004: 1265.
- 31 Reynolds and Reynolds 1982: 203; Gosling 1991: 63–64; Miksic 2010: 360, 394. Vickery 1974 questioned the fourteenth-century date of its composition; see Reynolds and Reynolds 1982, appendix, and Reynolds 1976. Although the earliest complete recension of Luthai's work can only be dated to 1778, contemporary inscriptional evidence indicates that the concept of the *Trai Phum* constituted an important worldview in the fourteenth century, see Reynolds 2006: 166, 167–168. Regardless of whether Luthai composed the *Traibhumikatha* or whether it was composed in 1345, the *Traibhumikatha* occupied an important place in Thai politico-religious thought in the fourteenth century; Miksic 2013: 148–151.
- 32 Miksic 2010: 361.
- 33 Sud Chonchirdsin 2004: 1264; Reid 1988: 105.
- 34 Gutman 2001a: 111–115.
- 35 Charnvit Kasetsiri 2004: 192.
- 36 Sud Chonchirdsin 2004: 1265.
- 37 Miksic 2010: 36.
- 38 Charnvit Kasetsiri 2004: 192.
- 39 Wyatt 1994: 66.
- 40 Wyatt 1994: 66; see also Charnvit Kasetsiri 2004: 193.
- 41 Wyatt 1984: 69.
- 42 Wyatt 1984: 69; see also Sud Chonchirdsin 2004: 1265.
- 43 Wyatt 1984: 69.
- 44 Wyatt 1984: 70–71.
- 45 Wyatt 1984: 44; Lieberman 2003: 243.



- 46 Lieberman 2003: 243.
- 47 Wyatt 1984: 47, quoting Notton 1932: 49.
- 48 Wyatt 1984: 48.
- 49 Wyatt 1984: 48–49.
- 50 Wyatt 1984: 49.
- 51 Wyatt 1984: 49–50.
- 52 Griswold and Prasert 1977: 153; quoted in Wyatt 1984: 50.
- 53 Wyatt 1984: 79–80.
- 54 Wyatt 1984: 81; see also Hazra 1973, Ratanapañña 1978, especially Manavidura's introduction.
- 55 Veidlinger 2006, Goh 2015: 103.
- 56 McDaniel 2008: 70–76.
- 57 McDaniel 2008: 70, 72, 272, footnote 9; Goh 2015: 103–104.
- 58 Wyatt 1984: 83–84.
- 59 Wyatt 1984: 83; Lieberman 2003: 243; Stuart-Fox 1997: 7.
- 60 Colani 1935.
- 61 Box 2003: 92–93.
- 62 Stuart-Fox 1997: 8.
- 63 Stuart-Fox 1997: 9; Wyatt 1984: 83.
- 64 Wyatt 1984: 83.
- 65 Stuart-Fox 1997: 9.
- 66 Wyatt 1984: 83.
- 67 Wyatt 1984: 83–84.
- 68 Aung-Thwin 1998: 114–115.
- 69 Lieberman 2003: 123–130.
- 70 Aung-Thwin 1998: 94.
- 71 *She Haung Myanmar Kyauksar Myar* III 1971–91: 158; Aung-Thwin 1998: 95.
- 72 *Yuan Shi* quoted in Chen 1960: 154, Luce 1959: 88, Aung-Thwin 1998: 97.
- 73 Sun n.d.: 13; Aung-Thwin 1998: 100; the king's dethronement is also corroborated in the *Yazawinthin*, see Twinthin 1968: 159.
- 74 Kala 1960: 311; *Zatadawpon* 1960: 41; Bennett 1971: 31–2; Aung-Thwin 1998: 100.
- 75 See *Zatadawpon* 1960: 41.
- 76 For a detailed discussion, see Aung-Thwin 1996; Aung-Thwin 1998.
- 77 Aung-Thwin 1990.
- 78 Aung-Thwin 1998: 115; see also Aung-Thwin 1998: 193, endnote 85.
- 79 *She Haung Myanmar Kyauksar Myar* III 1971–91: 253–254; Aung-Thwin 1998: 116.
- 80 Aung-Thwin 1998: 117.
- 81 *Zatadawpon* 1960: 42; Kala 1960: 345; Aung-Thwin 1998: 118.
- 82 Twinthin 1968: 164; Goh 2009: 122.
- 83 Twinthin 1968: 165.
- 84 See also Aung-Thwin 1996.
- 85 Aung-Thwin and Aung-Thwin 2012: 109.
- 86 Aung-Thwin and Aung-Thwin 2012: 118. See also Nai Pan Hla 1977, quoted in Surakiat 2006: 13.
- 87 Aung-Thwin and Aung-Thwin 2012: 107; Lieberman refers to this region as “Ra-manyā”; Lieberman 2003: 129–130.
- 88 Harvey 1925: 73, 106; Hall 1950: 32; Saimong Mangrai 1965: 49; Than Tun 1959: 131, 133; Lieberman 1984: 15.
- 89 Krom 1931: 328; Dumarçay 1996: 119.
- 90 For a summary of old arguments on this subject, see Hall 1981: 85–87. Krom's original argument, according to which Kertanagara launched a military expedition meant to compel Malayu to become a subsidiary part of

Singhasari's mandala, still seems the most logical, given the vast evidence for centuries of hostility between Java and Sumatra.

- 91 Coedès 1968: 217.
- 92 For the details of the Mongol/Chinese campaign, see Groeneveldt 1960: 22–27. One of the generals was given 17 lashes and one third of his property was confiscated.
- 93 Miksic 1979.
- 94 Rockhill 1914: 238.
- 95 Wade, Geoff, translator, *Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-Lu*. Hong-wu, 26 February 1369.
- 96 Miksic 2014b.
- 97 Wolters 1970: 49–76.
- 98 Amelia S. 1995.
- 99 Groeneveldt 1960: 47; Mills 1970: 88.
- 100 Amelia 1995.
- 101 Wheatley 1959: 45–114.
- 102 Gompertz, Haag, and Carey 2011.
- 103 Stutterheim 1948.
- 104 Miksic 2011a.
- 105 Abu Ridho 1983: 71.
- 106 Watt 1984: 188; Dupoizat and Naniek Harkantiningih 2007.
- 107 Groeneveldt 1960: 53; Mills 1970: 97.
- 108 Laporan Penelitian Arkeologi 1995.
- 109 Hadimulyono 1984: 12.
- 110 Gompertz, Haag, and Carey 2012.
- 111 Dumarçay 1996.
- 112 Bosch 1921; Stutterheim 1936b.
- 113 Blom 1935.
- 114 Pigeaud 1960–63; Robson 1995.
- 115 Brandes 1920; Phalgunadi 1996.
- 116 Zoetmulder 1974: 373–380.
- 117 Soewito Santoso 1975.
- 118 Zoetmulder 1974: 367–374.
- 119 Soekmono 1974, 1975.
- 120 Hariani Santiko 2000.
- 121 Pigeaud 1960: 16–17.
- 122 Compare these with the site of Pugungraharjo in Lampung, Sumatra; Bronson et al. 1973: 57.
- 123 Tim Penelitian 1977/1978: 16–28; Ras 1968.
- 124 Miksic 2011b, 2011c.
- 125 Miksic and Yap 1992.
- 126 Salmon 2003.
- 127 Marsis Sutopo 1992.
- 128 Robson 1995: 33.
- 129 de Casparis 1991: 31.
- 130 de Casparis 1975.
- 131 Griffiths 2014: 222, footnote 41.
- 132 Miksic 1986, 1987.
- 133 Schnitger 1937: 27.
- 134 Bautze-Picron 2014: 10. “These two deities have so many iconographic characteristics in common that it is often difficult to draw clear distinctions between them. Not only in India but also in Indonesia, the identity

of statues of these deities can often not be determined with certainty. This is especially true of statues created during the Majapahit period. . .”; Fontein 1990: 167.

- 135 Griffiths 2012.
- 136 Griffiths 2011.
- 137 Teguh Hidayat and Yusfa Hendra 2006; Marsis Sutopo 1992.
- 138 For example, Van der Meulen 1974: 12–13; Dobbin 1983: 61.
- 139 Tjoa-Bonatz 2013.
- 140 Kern 1917: 169, 173, 174.
- 141 Dobbin 1983: 63–67.
- 142 Dobbin 1983: 67.
- 143 Kozok, Miksic, Hunter, and Mahdi 2015.
- 144 Reichle 2007, figures 5.1–2.; Griffiths 2014.
- 145 Nguyen-Long 2013: 51.
- 146 Whitmore 2013: 6.
- 147 Nguyen-Long 2013: 51.
- 148 Whitmore 2013: 7.
- 149 Nguyen-Long 2013: 51–52.
- 150 Miksic 2007: 103, 395.
- 151 Nguyen-Long 2013: 52.
- 152 Le 2006: 149.
- 153 Sun 2006: 77; Nguyen-Long 2013: 53.
- 154 Phan et al. 2002: 18.
- 155 Nguyen-Long 2013: 66–67; Sun 2006: 75.
- 156 Nguyen-Long 2013: 63–64.
- 157 Vien 1976: 225, referenced in Nguyen-Long 2013: 63.
- 158 Lam 1997: 140.
- 159 Cort 1997: 74–76; Nguyen-Long 2011: 106–191; Nguyen-Long 2013: 66.
- 160 Nguyen-Long 2013: 63.
- 161 Le 2006: 34, 146, 148, 217.
- 162 Nguyen-Long 2013: 53–54.
- 163 Nguyen-Long 2013: 62–63.
- 164 Quach-Langlet 1988: 36–37; works which focus on the highlands are rare, but the significance of the highlands has become more emphasized in recent scholarship; see also Whitmore 2011: 172.
- 165 Whitmore 2011: 182; Majumdar 1985: inscription numbers 87–90.
- 166 Majumdar 1985: 30, 160–161; Rockhill 1915: 85–99; Hirth and Rockhill 1911; Wade 2011; Whitmore 2011: 182.
- 167 Whitmore 2011: 174–175.
- 168 Miksic 2007: 92.
- 169 Miksic 2007: 93.
- 170 Whitmore 2011: 197.
- 171 Chihara 1996: 222–223.
- 172 Schweyer 2011: 72.
- 173 Schweyer 2011: 87–90.
- 174 Diem 2011: 206.
- 175 Morimoto and Ohashi 2002: 38; Diem 2011: 209.
- 176 Morimoto and Yamasaki 2001, Diem 2011: 209.
- 177 Harisson 1985: 38–40; Diem 2011: 210.
- 178 Whitmore 2013: 9.

- 179 Perret, Heddy Surachman, and Dupoizat 2009.
- 180 Salmon 2009: 435–441; Edwards McKinnon 1977: 32; 1984: 85–86, 110.
- 181 Perret et al. 2003: 192.
- 182 Perret, Heddy Surachman, Péronnet et al. 2009.
- 183 Miksic and Yap 1990, 1992.
- 184 Edwards McKinnon 2003.
- 185 Subbarayalu 2009.
- 186 Subbarayalu 2009.
- 187 Rockhill 1915: 148.
- 188 Groeneveldt 1960: 98; Mills 1970: 122.
- 189 Cortesao 1944: 137–138.
- 190 Edwards McKinnon 1988.
- 191 Latham 1958: 254.
- 192 Perret 2009: 582.
- 193 Frank and Chen 1973: 91–94.
- 194 Hill 1960.
- 195 Moquette 1913.
- 196 Hirth and Rockhill 1911: 155.
- 197 Frank and Chen 1973.
- 198 Nicholl 1979.
- 199 B. Harrisson 1970.
- 200 B. Harrisson and P.M. Shariffudin 1969.
- 201 Matussin Omar 1981.
- 202 Brown 1970.
- 203 Miksic 2013.
- 204 Krom 1923: 390–394.
- 205 Hirth and Rockhill 1911: 83, 86.
- 206 Sunarto and Sukanda-Tessier 1983; Djajadiningrat 1983: 158.
- 207 Pigeaud 1962: 36, 291, 401.
- 208 Pigeaud 1962: IV, 75.
- 209 De Haan 1911: 158–160.
- 210 Raffles 1978/1817: II, 133.
- 211 De Haan 1911: 231 and map, facing unnumbered page.
- 212 Guillaud et al. 1994.
- 213 Abu Ridho and Edwards McKinnon 1998.
- 214 Miksic, Bronson, Brown, and Flecker 1997.
- 215 Braudel 1972: II, 107.
- 216 Schottenhammer 2001: 103.
- 217 Flecker 2012: 18.
- 218 Sjostrand, Adi Haji Taha, and Samsol Sahar 2006: 111; Flecker 2012: 27.
- 219 Miksic 2013.
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# 8

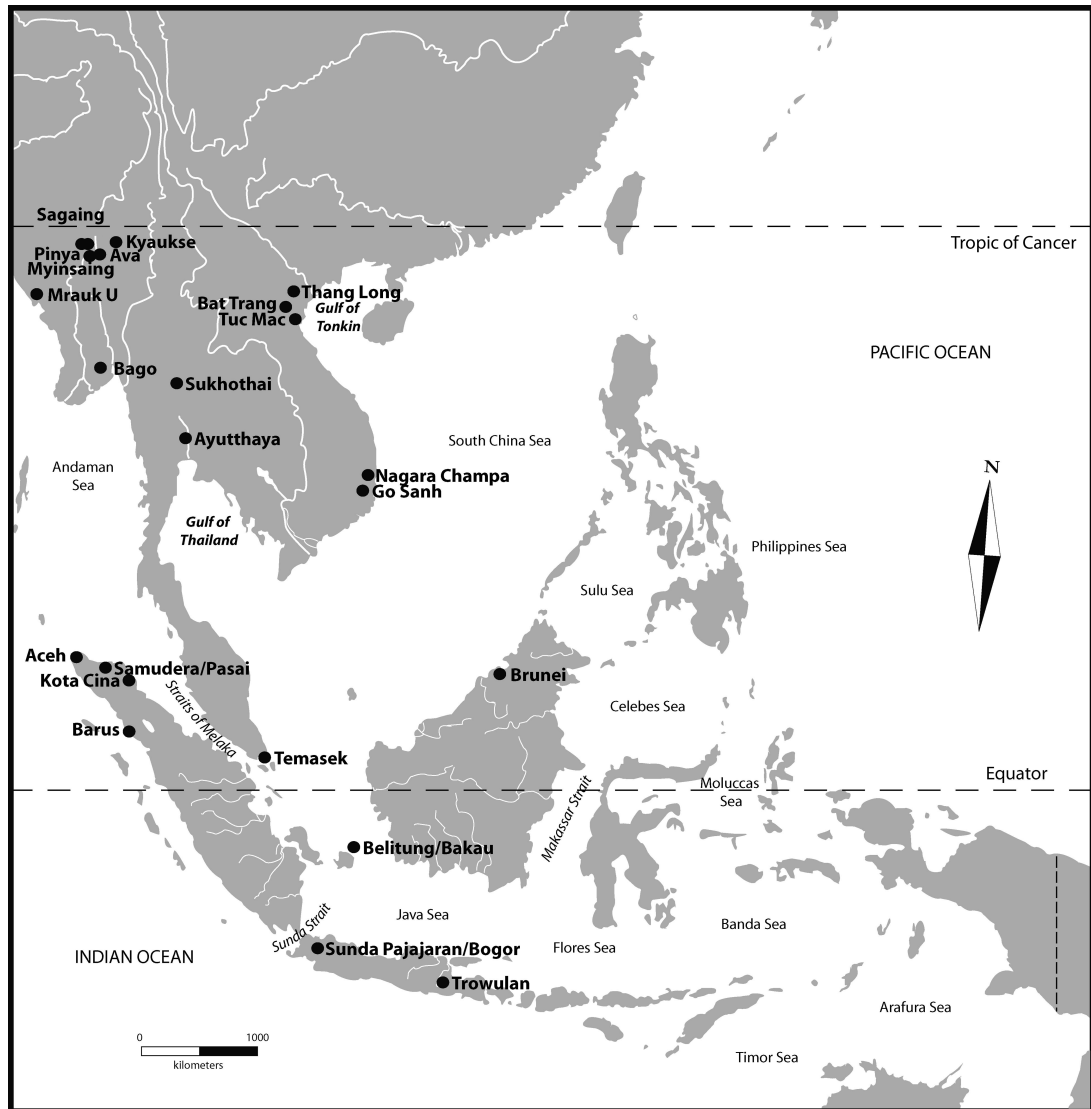
## POSTCLASSIC

1400 to 1600 CE

Traditional historians led by George Coedès identified the fourteenth century as the last gasp of Sanskrit civilization. The end of the Classic is commonly portrayed as a time when great ancient kingdoms modeled on Indian exemplars and characterized by cosmopolitanism and cooperation fell, and a chaotic period of division and competition ensued. Tai, Burmese, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Cham all fought major wars. Some ancient mandalas faded away (Angkor, Malayu, Majapahit, and Bagan). Three new kingdoms dominated the Postclassic: on the mainland, Ayutthaya and Bago; in the islands, Melaka, which was succeeded by Banten after the Portuguese conquest in 1511 (Figure 8.1).

Traditional narrative history focuses on the rise and fall of kingdoms, critical battles, great men, and specific events. This paradigm was shaped by European scholars during the late colonial and early post-colonial periods. Structural historians emphasize both the inexorable decline and fragmentation of Classic culture and the transition to new cultural models rather than the rise and fall of polities. Contrary to the traditional paradigm, for structural historians the transition from the Classic to the Postclassic does not represent devolution, a decline in the complexity of society.<sup>1</sup> The skill and resources devoted to sculpture and architecture diminished greatly, but new art forms such as tombstones, mosque and palace architecture, and the appropriation of Chinese, Theravada Buddhist, and Islamic motifs increased, forming new hybrid art styles. The first wave of Chinese immigration in the Late Classic receded, and the first overseas Chinese communities were absorbed into local communities, but their inclusion led to new economic and settlement patterns. Material prosperity increased. The resumption of communication between China and Seasia in 1567 after two centuries is seldom considered as a major watershed, but that change had a significant long-term effect on Seasia's economy and society which made an equal, if not larger, contribution to the formation of the Early Modern period after 1600 as much as the arrival of the northern Europeans.

The Portuguese conquered Melaka in 1511, initiating European colonization, but it is now realized that the Portuguese had little influence on the dynamics of the region. The arrival of the Portuguese



**Figure 8.1** Map of Postclassic sites

created a realignment of economic power, but the long-term effect of their arrival was minimal. They became integrated into the pre-existing system. It was only with the arrival of the Dutch and English in 1596 that systemic change was foreshadowed.

From the standpoint of the history of events, the beginning of the fifteenth century forms a major watershed in Seasian history, but structural historians perceive fundamental continuity between the Classic, the Postclassic, and the Modern periods. Hinduism and esoteric Buddhism vanished from most of Seasia after 1,000 years. The rapid effacement of two world religions from such a large and



sophisticated region is rare in world history. The two main regions of Seasia diverged significantly in the direction of their change. In the Classic agrarian kingdoms, Buddhism had been present but less popular than Brahminical religion. In the Postclassic, Theravada became the dominant priestly lineage. This form of Buddhism was fostered by Seasians who went to Sri Lanka; thus the hand of South Asia in this change can still be discerned. As Coedès noted,<sup>2</sup> Islamization in Seasia was also due at least in part to contact with India. Although the changes of Postclassic Seasia can thus be seen as a continuation of the old sphere of interaction linking South and Seasia, the Late Classic was marked by the gradual divergence of the Malayo-Polynesian-speaking areas from the rest of Seasia. Arabia became the cultural model and center of the universe for the insular realm, whereas Buddhists continued to revere pilgrimage sites in India.

Hinduism and esoteric Buddhism were not suddenly overthrown by the new world views of Islam and Theravada; instead the old sets of symbols and the ideas behind them faded away because they no longer provided satisfying answers to new existential questions which arose as long-distance communication became more frequent. The ideological vacuum thus created was only briefly filled in the early Postclassic by the revival of some Preclassic cults expressed in forms taken partly from ancient Indic forebears. These versions were localized, and tended to perpetuate the conspicuous consumption of luxury imports by elites. This value system was inexorably changing.

As population grew, new occupations appeared along with new aspirations for material well-being, including acquisition of mass-produced imported commodities. The ideals of capital formation and investment in productive enterprises rather than ostentatious rituals rendered older cultural displays obsolete.

Seasians had been aware of the existence of Islam from the time of the Prophet Muhammad, but they were already members of world religious communities. Not until large portions of India became Muslim did the faith begin to take root in Seasia. The two developments are directly related; the port societies of Seasia and India continued to be closely linked both economically and culturally. The concentration of trade in coastal areas explains why Islam became significant in ports centuries before it expanded into the interior. When Islam began to penetrate the hinterland of Java, it followed ancient transport routes. This expansion, however, was accomplished by the formation of a form of Islam which incorporated Javanese culture.

Islam gained its first foothold in the ancient north Sumatran trading zone at the entrance to the Straits of Melaka where Arabs and Indians had been present since at least the tenth century. Gradually other areas on the coasts of the mainland and insular areas became converted, but the process was neither linear nor can it be explained as a single process. Areas in eastern Indonesia were converted before Sulawesi. Islamization was not one but many processes. In some areas Islam's adoption was probably correlated with trade, in others with politics, in others with the spread of education in Arabic (replicating the introduction of Sanskrit a millennium earlier). Islam spread by conquest in only a few cases. The spread of Islam had important effects on capital formation: The new religion discouraged conspicuous consumption in rituals, unlike the previous polities whose main reason for existing, it has been suggested, was to hold large festivals.<sup>3</sup> Islam took several forms at different times and places, from the more mystically inclined to the more worldly.

Despite the fact that the expansion of Islam occurred after the arrival of European observers, we have little information on the processes by which it spread. Much of our reconstruction has to be based on attempts to interpret chronicles which mirror the political considerations of the periods in which they were compiled. The chroniclers depict key events in symbolic mystical, rather than political or economic, terms.

## THE IMPACT OF THE MING DYNASTY ON SEASIA AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF OVERSEAS CHINESE COMMUNITIES

In the fifteenth century, Seasia's population may have reached 20 million people, a high proportion of whom lived in cities.<sup>4</sup> Cities (a network of settlements consisting of multiple tiers, including both dispersed and dense sites) existed during the eight centuries of the Classic, but the Postclassic marked the first time that a sizeable population of foreigners, including women, took up permanent residence in Seasian cities. During the Classic, foreign men married local wives and their children were brought up as Seasians. The presence of foreign mothers ensured that families would introduce foreign cultural traits to Seasia, including food, clothing, and language.

In 1292 the Yuan fleet which carried Marco Polo west built its own encampment on the north coast of Sumatra; they would probably have spent the monsoon in an area where Chinese already lived, if such a place had existed then. Wang Dayuan in 1349 only mentioned two places where Chinese lived in Seasia: the minor port of Temasik, and a small island off southwest Borneo. By the start of the Postclassic in 1400, there were several enclaves of several thousand Chinese in Java, plus at least one in Sumatra. This early wave of Chinese immigration has received little attention from scholars. Many of these Chinese, unlike the later waves, were Muslim. This created an ironic situation from the standpoint of the twenty-first century in which Chinese abstained from pork and alcohol and decried the indulgence of the Javanese in these substances (the same role reversal exists in Myanmar today).

It can thus be deduced that Chinese communities formed in Seasia between Wang Dayuan's sojourns in the 1330s and the voyages of Ma Guan in the early 1400s. One stimulus for their formation may have been warfare between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims in Quanzhou during the chaotic last days of the Yuan dynasty.<sup>5</sup> Communities may already have begun to form in Indonesia and the Philippines between 1330 and 1368, when Chinese official policy toward private commerce was comparatively liberal. When the first Ming emperor imposed draconian anti-mercantile regulations and ordered all Chinese to return to China, the Chinese overseas may have refused for fear of punishment for being overseas without permission. This policy led to the disappearance of overseas Chinese communities; they assimilated into Seasian societies.

The first Ming emperor wanted to restore what he believed were traditional Chinese values, so he imposed restrictions on contact between Chinese and foreigners. The third Ming emperor sent missions overseas to compensate for the loss of foreign exotic goods which the elite lifestyle required. Approximately 25 expeditions sailed as far as the east coast of Africa. Like the voyage of Han dynasty emissaries 1,500 years earlier, they were led by eunuchs. Mission leaders included Ma He, Ma Pin, Wu Bin, Zhang Ko-qing, and Hou Xien.

Of these envoys, Ma He is by far the best known. Ma was a common surname used by Sinicized Muslims. He was born in Yunnan in about 1371, a descendant of Mongol invaders, a Muslim, and a eunuch, un-Chinese attributes which qualified him perfectly for this duty. Trade routes in the Indian Ocean and Seasia at this time were dominated by Muslims. His father and grandfather had made the pilgrimage to Mekkah. Ma He aided Yong Le's coup against the second Ming emperor, Yunwen, in 1402. As a reward, he was promoted and given the honorific surname Zheng. He organized seven voyages, and personally accompanied five of them. Six of Zheng He's voyages (1405–1421) were organized by the Yongle emperor. The fifth Ming emperor, Xuande, sponsored one voyage in 1432.

Zheng He's largest ships were termed "ships (for fetching) precious stones from the western ocean", or "jewel-ships", underlining their main function. The main fleet usually sailed to Champa, then to Surabaya where it remained for about four months waiting for the wind to change. When the east monsoon came, the ships sailed via Palembang to India. Detachments visited other ports. On the return voyages, the fleet and its detachments sometimes rendezvoused at Melaka, where they built a fortified stockade like the one mentioned by Marco Polo. On the last leg, the fleet usually passed through the Singapore Strait and into the South China Sea.

One of the main missions of the first fleet, which consisted of 63 "jewel ships" and 28,000 personnel, was to deal with the Chinese community at Palembang. In 1405 Yongle ordered Zheng He to appoint a member of the Chinese community in Palembang as the local leader. In 1408 a fleet went to Palembang to capture and transport back to Nanjing for execution a pirate from Guangzhou who had fled there in the Hongwu period. This fleet also called at Java, Aru, and Aceh in north Sumatra, and several ports in India, to collect tribute and transport foreign ambassadors back to their home countries.

The next voyage led by Zheng He consisted of 48 ships which departed in 1410. After Champa and Java, the fleet visited Melaka, where Zheng He set up a stone inscription acknowledging Melaka as a vassal kingdom. This had implications for Melaka's relationship with Ayutthaya. Next the fleet visited Samudera, India, and Sri Lanka, where a king had failed to pay the respect Zheng He demanded. The king was captured and taken to China's new capital, Beijing, in 1411.

The voyage of 1414 was complex. The fleet visited Champa, Kelantan, Pahang, Java, Palembang, Melaka, Aru, Samudera, Aceh, Sri Lanka, India, and the Persian Gulf. On his return journey in mid-1415, Zheng He captured a usurper in Samudera and brought him back to China for execution. Another expedition left in 1417, visited seven Seasian destinations, South Asia, and then east Africa, where it collected exotic animals.

The last expedition sent by Yong Le probably set off in January 1422. Zheng He does not seem to have accompanied this fleet. Its main mission was to return envoys to their countries in Seasia, the Persian Gulf, Arabia, and east Africa.

Zheng He's last expedition in 1432 was dispatched by Yong Le's grandson, Xuan De. The fleet set off on January 12, arrived in Champa on January 27, and departed on February 12; arrived in Surabaya on March 7 and departed July 13; arrived in Palembang July 24 and departed July 27; arrived in Melaka August 3 and departed September 2; arrived in Aceh September 12 and departed November 2; and arrived in Sri Lanka on November 28. From there the fleet went to the Persian Gulf. The fleet was back in China on July 7, 1433.

Zheng He lived until 1444. After Xuan De's reign, no more fleets left China. Records of the expeditions, the ships, and even the shipyard where they had been built were destroyed, robbing historians of valuable material. The motive for the ban was to prevent Chinese from going abroad in search of useless luxuries, and bringing back foreign cultural pollution. This ban lasted for 123 years, until 1567. The Ming ban had significant effects on China, Seasia, and the world.

Three important documents survived the destruction. One, *Ying-ya Sheng-lan*, "A Comprehensive Survey of the Shores of the Ocean", was written by Ma Guan, a Chinese Muslim interpreter and recorder with three of Zheng He's expeditions. His notes were published in 1451. An imperial clerk wrote in an afterword that Ma Guan and Guo Zhongli used to give talks about their travels. Ma had read Wang Dayuan's *Dao Yi Zhi Lue*. Extant versions of the book derive from recensions printed in 1617 and later. His family came from about 40 kilometers southeast of Hangzhou. He was able to read either Arabic or Persian language written in Arabic script.

*Wubeizhi*, a treatise on military preparation which was presented to the emperor no earlier than 1628, contains a navigational chart known as the Mao Kun map, the only map which survived from the voyages of the jewel ships. Mao Kun had been a member of the staff in China's coast guard. This is one of the oldest maps of Seasia. The map concentrates on coasts, and gives sailing routes along with 499 place names from Nanjing to Hormuz, about 12,000 kilometers apart. Another navigational manual with the subtitle *Shun-feng xiang-sung*, "Fair Winds for Escort", is dated  $\pm 1430$ .<sup>6</sup>

*Xing-cha sheng-lan*, or "Description of the Starry Raft", was written in 1436 by Fei Xin, who made several voyages with Zheng He. Fragments of another work about the Zheng He missions, *Hsi yang fan kuo chih*, "Description of Foreign Countries of the West", dated 1432, by a secretary, also survive.

Between 1435 and 1509, the only important foreign records of Seasia are those compiled in Ryukyu, which was then an independent kingdom which acted as a middleman between China and Seasia. These records<sup>7</sup> provide important information on trade with Melaka, Palembang, and Java. People with Chinese names served as envoys from Java to China until 1465, but thereafter the overseas Chinese communities assimilated into the local populations. When the Portuguese arrived in 1509, they heard that Chinese ships and merchants had been common in the past, but had not been seen for decades. Only in Ayutthaya was there a community of people who identified themselves as Chinese.

## ARRIVAL OF EUROPEANS

The Portuguese rediscovered the work of Klaudios Ptolemaios in the fifteenth century in Byzantium. At that time the spice trade of Europe was monopolized by Venice, which had a contract with the Mameluke sultans of Egypt, who received their spices and other eastern commodities from India and Seasia. The immense profits of this trade inspired the Portuguese to circumvent this partnership by going directly to the source of the commodities. Against all odds, they achieved this goal in 1511, after decades of effort, by capturing Melaka. This proved only a minor disruption to Seasian trade. Muslim traders shifted their operations to other ports, principally Banten in west Java. The Portuguese maintained outposts in India and Seasia, but did not have the resources or organization to expand further. They contributed elements

to the cultures of Seasia, including words for such objects as table and butter, but they did not cause any change to the system of trade or the mandalas of the region. They did collect information which provides a major source of knowledge about Seasia during the Postclassic period.<sup>8</sup>

### Shipwrecks of the Postclassic period

The term “Ming gap” refers to the 200 years between 1368 and 1567 during which Chinese ceramics are scarce in Seasia.<sup>9</sup> Blue and white porcelain was almost non-existent. Between 1368 and 1430, the proportion of Chinese ceramics in shipwrecks fell from 100 per cent to 30 to 40 per cent. Between 1430 and 1490, Chinese ceramics constitute no more than 5 per cent of cargoes. After 1490, Chinese wares began to be exported again.<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to identify early Ming trade ceramics. Archaeologists sometimes combine the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries as one time period because of uncertainty surrounding the dating of Chinese wares.<sup>11</sup> No reign-marked pieces from the imperial factory in Jingdezhen are known.<sup>12</sup> More than 30 shipwrecks from the fifteenth century have been found in Seasia, indicating that the Chinese retreat from the outside world had little effect on commerce. Although Chinese ceramics were almost non-existent on board the *Rang Kwien* shipwreck (1400–1425), the cargo included at least three tons of Chinese coins. Thailand and Vietnam quickly seized the opportunity to fill the gap; many ceramics from these two sources appear on fifteenth-century shipwrecks.

### *Turiang*

The *Turiang* is the oldest known ship with a cargo of Seasian glazed pottery.<sup>13</sup> It was probably a Chinese ship. The ceramic cargo consisted of 46 per cent Sukhothai, 11 per cent Si Satchanalai, 8 per cent Vietnamese, and 35 per cent Chinese pottery. At least four jars from Suphanburi were also recovered. Non-ceramic cargo included iron ore and elephant tusks. The ship was found off the Malay Peninsula. It was probably heading toward the Straits of Melaka or Java.

### *The Bakau (Maranei) wreck*

The *Bakau (Maranei)* is another Chinese-built ship. It sank in the Karimata Strait between Belitung and Borneo.<sup>14</sup> The vessel had sailed to south China, called at a Thai port, then sank in the main shipping lane between the South China Sea and Java. Most of the cargo was looted by fishermen; it included Suphanburi jars which contained grain; Thai, Vietnamese, and Chinese glazed ceramics; and Fine Paste earthenware. The approximate date of the shipwreck can be estimated by coins minted in Yongle’s reign. Other cargo included bronze gongs, mirrors and handles, tweezers, grindstones and rollers, and stacks of iron woks. This ship belongs to the Zheng He period, but it was obviously not part of his fleet; it was technically a smuggler. The ship’s cargo included several small bronze cannon.

These may be the oldest known examples of shipboard cannon in the world, but they could have been intended for sale.

### ***Royal Nanhai***

The vessel *Royal Nanhai*, found off Malaysia's east coast, is made of tropical hardwood, and is a hybrid vessel combining Seasian and Chinese construction methods. Its cargo included more than 21,000 ceramics, mostly Sawankhalok celadon, along with storage jars from Singburi and some Chinese brown ware. Four Chinese blue and white bowls and two Vietnamese blue and white covered boxes were found hidden below floorboards. It has been argued that the blue and white ceramics date from the Chenghua reign (1465–1487); a radiocarbon date yielded a 95 per cent confidence interval for the ship's age of 1320 to 1460 (calibrated).<sup>15</sup> The true date probably lies near the earlier part of this range. The cargo also included iron and tin.

### ***Bukit Jakas***

*Bukit Jakas* was found at the edge of an estuary in Riau, near Singapore. This ship may have been intentionally abandoned. Few artifacts were found on the site. The ship was approximately 30 meters long. Radiocarbon dating places the ship in the period 1400 to 1460. Pierre-Yves Manguin first identified the hybrid South China Sea shipbuilding tradition during research at this site.<sup>16</sup>

### ***The Pandanan wreck***

The Pandanan shipwreck was found off the southwest tip of Palawan, southern Philippines. The hull suggests Seasian origin. A Yongle coin shows that the ship probably dates from the fifteenth century,<sup>17</sup> possibly the Zhenghua reign (1465–1487).<sup>18</sup> Vietnamese ware comprised 75.6 per cent of 4,722 ceramic pieces recovered; more than 3,000 were made in Go Sanh, Champa. The cargo also contained some Thai ware, and a few Chinese wares, including blue and whites, the oldest large shipment of blue and white ware yet discovered.

### ***Cu Lao Cham***

The hybrid ship *Cu Lao Cham* had a huge cargo, perhaps as many as 250,000 ceramics from Thailand, Champa, and China, including blue and white wares and polychrome enamel. A radiocarbon date gave a range of 1380 to 1499. Chinese bowls decorated with vajra motifs probably were made during the Interregnum period (1436–1464).<sup>19</sup>



### ***Brunei Junk***

The oldest known shipwrecks with large quantities of Chinese blue and white porcelain date from the Hongzhi period (1488–1505). The *Brunei Junk* sank in this reign. This site contained significant amounts of Chinese blue and white ware, some Vietnamese blue and white ceramics, and many storage jars, mostly from Singburi. No Sawankhalok celadon plates are known from this period; instead the ship contains some celadon plates from Myanmar, possibly Twante in the Ayeyarwadi Delta,<sup>20</sup> and Sawankhalok “coconut” jars and jarlets with ring-handles. One dish bears a four-character mark, “made in the Ming dynasty”.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Lena Shoal Junk***

The *Lena Shoal Junk* went down east of Busuanga in the Philippines. Its remaining cargo after looting consisted of 5,000 items, including ceramics, bronze cannon, spices, glass beads, lacquer, bronze bracelets, silver and iron ingots, iron woks, copper vessels, and elephant tusks. Chinese iron was still in demand in Seasia in the late fifteenth century. The *Ming Shi-lu* mentions Javanese ambassadors who requested iron. One was rejected because iron export was officially forbidden. In 1452, however, China granted the request of another Javanese mission for iron pots and nails as well as porcelain.<sup>22</sup>

The ceramic assemblage contained a few Vietnamese porcelains and Chinese celadons. Thai celadon included more than 400 jars which are not of the standard Si Satchanalai type; they may come from the northern Thai Kalong kilns. The ship may date from the Hongzhi reign, 1488 to 1505.<sup>23</sup> Also on board were storage jars from China, Thailand, Vietnam, and Myanmar.

## **FALL OF ANGKOR, FRAGMENTED POLITIES IN VIETNAM AND CHAMPA**

### **Fall of Angkor: The move to Longvek and Phnom Penh**

The Postclassic period in Cambodian history can be characterized as a dark age because of the limited information. No inscriptions exist from the mid-fourteenth to early sixteenth centuries.<sup>24</sup> Tai invasions began in 1353 when, according to Nong chronicles, King Ramadhipati seized Angkor. A Khmer prince retook Angkor in 1358, but the Tais attacked again in 1370.<sup>25</sup> Wolters thought that the Khmer moved to Basan near Phnom Penh in that year, then returned to Angkor. The Angkor period is conventionally deemed to have terminated in 1432 when Ayutthaya captured the capital after a third invasion. Ayutthaya established a governorship in Angkor for a short period, and then abandoned it. The center of the Khmer mandala moved frequently in the next century: first to Phnom Penh, then to Longvek, back to Angkor, then east to Oudong before finally settling in Phnom Penh.

Factors which contributed to the move to the east include the push factor of Ayutthaya’s increasing military threat and the pull factor of the Khmer rulers’ desire to gain access to the riches of maritime

trade.<sup>26</sup> Chinese records mention 21 tributary missions from the new capital.<sup>27</sup> Fifteenth-century Cambodia did not collapse but was transformed into something resembling its roots in Protoclassic Funan.<sup>28</sup> Angkor ceased to be the capital and few temples and inscriptions were created, but activity continued there after 1432. Kok Phnouv, outside the eastern boundary of Angkor Thom, yielded fifteenth-century Thai, Vietnamese, and Chinese ceramics, suggesting that there was still a prosperous community there.<sup>29</sup> Whether this community was controlled by Khmer or Tai leaders cannot be ascertained.

Phnom Penh's location at the confluence of the Mekong and Tonle Sap allowed the Khmer to establish a trading polity which could tap the riches of the riverine network connecting Phnom Penh, Laos, Tonle Sap, and the Mekong Delta. Some have suggested that the shift was engineered by a regional elite in the southeast. Cambodian chronicles record that Khmer king Ang Chan's capital was Longvek, south of the Tonle Sap, in 1528. While out hunting for elephants, the king came upon imposing structures, ordered the forests cleared, and "discovered" Angkor, as confirmed by Diego do Couto, who visited Cambodia in the sixteenth century. Ang Chan moved the capital back to Angkor; restored several structures, including Banteay Kdei, Baphuon, and Phnom Bakheng; completed the unfinished reliefs on the northeast corner and the east end of the north gallery in Angkor Wat in 1546; and had inscriptions carved on the bas-reliefs in 1566, the year he died.<sup>30</sup> Ang Chan's son, Parama Raja, set up his residence in Kompong Krasang near Angkor; the next king, Satha I, moved the capital back to Angkor in 1576. Other evidence of activity at Angkor includes restoration and production of new sculptures in one temple in the Preah Pithu group. Inscriptions dated 1577 and 1579 also described restoration at Angkor Wat.

During the sixteenth century, Angkor appears to have been the religious center of the Cambodian polity, whereas Longvek was the administrative capital. Spanish and Portuguese visitors to the site in 1586 noted its dilapidated state. Longvek was attacked and seized by the Tais in 1594; the king fled to Laos, where he died. This heralded increasing Cambodian weakness and subjection to Tai hegemony.

Later Khmer kings made pilgrimages to Angkor until 1658 when King Chau Ponhea Chan visited it for the last time. Devotees continued to make pilgrimages to the site, which was now a Buddhist monastery. A large donation was made in 1684; a minister restored statues in the early eighteenth century. French visitor P. Chevreul went to Cambodia in 1768 and described Angkor Wat; Bouillevaux wrote about the monument in 1858. Angkor Wat was certainly not "discovered" by Henri Mouhout.<sup>31</sup>

At the end of the sixteenth century, mercenaries and other foreigners like De Brito in Myanmar thronged the ports at Martaban, Ayutthaya, Manila, and Phnom Penh. Two Spanish adventurers, Blas Ruiz and Diego de Veloso, came to Phnom Penh from the Philippines and offered to provide the Cambodians with military knowledge and technology. Western firearms, especially naval canon, and new tactics were introduced to Seasia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>32</sup> Willingness to carry out "total war" in the sense of large-scale efforts to kill rather than capture the enemy distinguished European warfare from Seasian military customs.

Another important characteristic of the Postclassic period is the greater number of hybrid capitals such as Ayutthaya, Longvek, Bago, and later, Thanh Hoa, and colonial cities such as Manila, Melaka, Batavia, and Syriam. By the early seventeenth century Cambodia had become a maritime polity visited by merchants from Dutch, English, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, and Seasians from Sumatra and Sulawesi. In the Early Modern period, the mid-seventeenth century conversion of a Cambodian king to Islam following

his marriage to a Malay woman heralded a period of turmoil which included attacks from a Dutch naval force seeking to avenge the death of Dutch residents and insurgent rival princes who requested assistance from the Vietnamese. The Muslim king was eventually captured and sent to Vietnam.<sup>33</sup>

The rest of the seventeenth century saw the rapid decline of Cambodia as Phnom Penh ceased to be a trading center; Cambodia's access to the sea was blocked by the Vietnamese and fierce competition from coastal sites established by Chinese merchants who fled the newly established Qing dynasty. With the establishment of Nguyen control over southern Vietnam, Cambodia became largely a landlocked country effectively cut off from the lower Mekong on its southeastern border with the Nguyen, from the Gulf of Siam by Chinese coastal settlements, and by the Ayutthayan Empire on the west. From this point onward, Cambodia became a buffer state between two strong polities in Vietnam and Ayutthaya. Much weakened Cambodia sought French protection in the nineteenth century, a mere shadow of a once powerful empire.

### **FRAGMENTED POLITIES IN VIETNAM AND CHAMPA: HO, LE SO, MAC, LE (NORTH), AND NGUYEN (SOUTH)**

The narrative of Postclassic Vietnamese history is marked by the rise and demise of five dynasties which ruled part or all of Vietnam. Ming China occupied Thang Long and administered Vietnam (Jiaozhi) for 20 years. Vietnam and Champa continued to fight with each other at every opportunity. Vietnam's southward movement into Champa was a reflection of northward expansion by Cham polities during the reigns of kings such as Che Bong Nga, partially motivated by opportunities to raid and loot.

#### **Ho dynasty (1400–1407)**

Ho was a regent who plotted to have the Tran king murdered. During the 1380s and 1390s, the Ho family strategically intermarried with the Tran and consolidated control over the capital of Thang Long. During the turmoil which followed the Cham invasions of the late fourteenth century, Ho Quy Ly usurped power and established his own dynasty. Of Chinese origin, he adopted the Vietnamese surname Le to appeal to the local elite.

In 1400 Ho changed the country's name to Dai Ngu (Land of Eternal Peace). He moved the royal capital from Thang Long first to Dai La and then later Vinh Loc in Thanh Hoa Province, 150 kilometers south of Hanoi, far from the border with China. However, all Ho's planning could not deter the Ming invasions which brought about the end of Ho's dynasty, a year after his death. His dynasty lasted only seven years (1400–1407).<sup>34</sup>

Ho created two capitals: Vinh Loc, the Western Capital, or Tay Do, while Thang Long was reduced to the status of Eastern Capital (Dong Do). The practice of having two capitals appears to be a result of Chinese influence during the period of the Protectorate of Annam. Ho also ordered the dismantling of the Dai An and Thuy Chuong Palaces in Thang Long and ordered these transported via sea to Thanh

Hoa. According to Vietnamese sources, bad weather caused the ships to lose half of their cargo. The transfer of the palaces apparently began while Ho was still the regent in 1398.<sup>35</sup> Ho purportedly completed the construction of the Ho Citadel in Vinh Loc in 1397. The Ho Citadel was enclosed by an outer wall made of tamped earth topped by a fence of thorny bamboo. Impressive remains still exist: a wall measuring 900 meters by 700 meters and between 5 and 7 meters tall. Four stone bridges allowed access to entrances across the moat which surrounds the site.<sup>36</sup>

Archaeological research at the Citadel recovered artifacts which reflected Tran characteristics and most likely came from Thang Long.<sup>37</sup> The excavation of the Bao Thanh Palace in Dai La shows that the palace was constructed using materials taken from Thang Long.<sup>38</sup>

Despite Ho's efforts to carry out reforms, Tran supporters in court, as well as Chams who had been subjected to continuous campaigns undertaken by Ho, requested Chinese assistance against the Ho dynasty. Ho Vietnam succumbed to the Chinese attacks, overpowered by the effectiveness of firearms used against the Vietnamese elephant corps. The massive Ming campaign quickly conquered Dong Do, followed six days later by Tay Do.<sup>39</sup>

### **Ming occupation of Vietnam (1407–1427)**

China's conquest of Ho Vietnam was swift. Thang Long, renamed Dong Quan, became the new administrative center of Jiaozhi (Vietnam). The Chinese embarked on a systematic removal of all royal archives, including the Ly civil code, Tran law, the Tran kings' and generals' memoirs, poetry, and 30 volumes of the *Vietnamese Annals*. All traces of Thang Long's history were destroyed,<sup>40</sup> explaining the lack of remains from the pre-Le Loi period. Ho, his family, retinue, and numerous artisans were taken to China. Among them was a young eunuch, Nguyen An, who later served the Ming court; ironically he is known as the key architect of the Beijing Imperial Palace.<sup>41</sup>

The Ming imposed a new administrative system and divided the country into garrisons. A Chinese way of life was imposed on the Vietnamese. Vietnamese had to grow their hair long, don Ming dress, and employ Ming customs and traditions. Tattooing, betel nut chewing, and teeth lacquering were banned.<sup>42</sup> The new administration also made identity cards mandatory. Vietnamese men were subjected to military conscription.

The Chinese administration conscripted forced labourers and imposed heavy taxes on everything from rice fields to mulberry trees to silk cloth made on local looms. The resultant discontent led to numerous uprisings, the last of which brought about the defeat of the Chinese and reestablishment of indigenous rule under the Le So/Le dynasty led by Le Loi.

### **Le So/Le dynasty (1428–1527)**

Le Loi's uprising began at Lam Son, his home base in the mountain valley of western Thanh Hoa, in 1418. After 10 years of struggle, he defeated the Chinese and inaugurated the early Le dynasty (1428–1527).

Thang Long became the Le base of operations in the lowlands. Le Loi's home base became the family ritual center; during the hiatus between 1527 and 1533, Lam Son was a political refuge.<sup>43</sup> Le Loi referred to Thang Long as Dong Kinh ("the capital of the Kinh"); Lam Son became the Western capital, or Tay Kinh. The term "Tonkin" is derived from this name. He assumed the reign name Le Thai To (reigned 1428–1433), and renamed his country Dai Viet. Le Loi's declaration of victory over the Ming was commemorated in the epic, *Great Proclamation on the Victory over the Ngo (Ming) (Binh Ngo Dai Cao)*, composed by Nguyen Trai. Le Loi built a new capital on the foundations of the old one at Thang Long, and modelled the center after Tang Chang An. The basic pattern of royal capitals was retained. The Forbidden City was situated within the Royal City. In front of the Forbidden City was the Throne Room (Kinh Thien Palace). Inside were multiple palaces, one for rituals and others for residences.

Two groups occupied center stage during the Le dynasty: the aristocracy and the scholar gentry. The Le embraced Confucianism and supported the development of a scholar-gentry class. Their taste for scholasticism can be attributed to the influence of the renowned poet Nguyen Trai. The status of the Royal Academy rose rapidly as literati were placed in key positions.<sup>44</sup> Rituals and practices continued such as the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth and the spirits of the land as well as the blood oath, but Buddhism ceased to feature in official activities, even though members of the aristocracy continued to visit Buddhist temples. No new pagodas were constructed during this period; only restoration or upgrading work was allowed.<sup>45</sup>

Le Thai To made a concerted effort to strengthen Dai Viet's army and navy, and to increase production of firearms and gunpowder. In the reign of Le Thanh Tong (1460–1497), Dai Viet embarked on an unprecedented number of victorious military campaigns. Dai Viet sacked Champa in 1446 and took the Cham king and 33,500 captives back to Thang Long. Dai Viet also invaded Laos, Muong Phuan, and Lan Xang and even reached Ava.<sup>46</sup>

Dai Viet also reached a new zenith in ceramic production. At Le Thanh Tong's ascent to the throne, Vietnam exported porcelain as far as West Asia. While the Vietnamese had been producing ceramics for a long time, Vietnamese potters reached new heights. The wider range of ceramic forms, types, and decorations displayed not only new decorative motifs, but also techniques and colours.<sup>47</sup> A remarkable example is a white and blue jar which forms part of the Topkapi Sarai Museum collection in Istanbul. This jar bears an inscription which gives the year 1450, the name of the potters, and the production site.<sup>48</sup>

Trowulan, capital of Majapahit, has yielded numerous Vietnamese sherds of the fifteenth century. Shipwrecks constitute another important source of information on Vietnamese ceramics. The *Hoi An* wreck was loaded with a large cargo of Vietnamese ceramics, of which 150,000 intact items were salvaged. The *Cu Lao Cham* wreck contained more than 200,000 pieces of late fifteenth-century blue-and-white underglaze and monochrome ceramics produced in the Hong River Delta. Cham storage jars were also found on board. A type of Cham jar found on the site is identical to jars used in the *chanoyu* (tea ceremony) in Japan.<sup>49</sup>

The Pandanan wreck, which sank off the Philippines, was probably heading for Borneo. Other shipwrecks which yielded Vietnamese ceramic items are the *Bakau* wreck in Indonesia, *Rang Kwi* and *Ko Si Chang* in Thai waters and the *Lena Junk*, Philippines (see "Shipwrecks of the Postclassic period", this chapter).<sup>50</sup>

Archaeological research in the Red River Delta shows that Hai Duong was the center of Vietnamese ceramic production during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The high-fired wares produced for export here were sent to Indonesia and the Philippines. Van Don, Halong Bay, was at first used to trans-ship these ceramics, but in the late fifteenth century the trade shifted to Pho Hien. This latter location might have been chosen because it was closer to the Hai Duong kilns. It was also easier for the Le government to extract taxes there. Vietnamese ceramic production clearly benefited from the Ming emperors' imposition of a ban on private foreign trade.

Another major achievement during the early Le period was the production of the Hong Duc map of 1490. This provides an image of Thang Long as a "boot-shaped Royal City (Dragon)" resting within "broader Dai La city walls" and enclosing a rectangular Forbidden City.<sup>51</sup> The mapping of Thang Long demonstrates the importance of the Royal City not only politically, but cosmologically.

Le Thanh Tong's reign can be characterized as the peak of Le rule. Le Thanh Tong's son Hien Tong (reigned 1498–1504) could barely maintain control over the growing volatile situation in Dai Viet. Dai Viet and Thang Long erupted into increasing disorder as a result of population pressure, rigid state control of land, and lack of access to government posts. His death introduced a quarter century of chaos, infighting and revolts, which provided the ideal setting for another group to seize power.<sup>52</sup>

### Mac Interregnum (1527–1592)

The Mac usurpation began when Mac Dang Dung, prime minister to the last Le king before the interregnum, Le Cung Hoang (reigned 1522–1527), took the throne and founded the Mac dynasty. The Mac kept Thang Long as one capital, and set up a second capital at Co Trai.<sup>53</sup> The Mac retained the traditions and bureaucratic model of the Le dynasty. It restarted the civil service examination system and set up new inscriptions at the Temple of Literature. It continued to support the literati by rebuilding the Royal Academy and the Royal Study Hall.<sup>54</sup>

Buddhism flourished during the early period of Mac rule as the new rulers promoted agriculture and trade, and encouraged popular religion. New villages developed which brought about the creation of new local industries, and Buddhism became popular in the villages. This brought about an increase in the building of new pagodas and the commissioning of new statuary. During the second half of the sixteenth century, the thousand-eyed, thousand-armed version of Quan Am became extremely popular as an efficacious protector. Local tutelary spirits and other supernatural beings were propitiated in the village *dinh*, a timber structure which served two functions: administrative and cultural. This became the site where village activities were centered.<sup>55</sup>

The latter half of the Mac dynasty was characterized by conflict. Two clans, the Nguyen and the Trinh, supported the deposed Le elite and helped Le Trang Tong (1533–1548) to reinstate the Le dynasty in Thanh Hoa, the Le home base. In the 1530s, there were two parallel courts in Vietnam: the northern Mac court in Thang Long and the southern Le court in Thanh Hoa. The campaign to recapture the royal city began in 1549 when the Nguyen and Trinh clans began to attack the Mac. By the 1580s, the Le, Trinh, and Nguyen were closing in on Thang Long. The Mac built defensive structures outside Dai La



to stop the invading armies, and though these were higher than those in the Royal City, the Mac were defeated in 1592 and fled to the north.

## CHAMPA AND THE NGUYEN (1558–1788) IN THE SOUTH

Champa was much weakened by the death of Che Bong Nga, which made it vulnerable to an attack from Vietnam during the short Ho dynasty. To avoid complete defeat, the Cham ruler sent tribute of two white and black elephants and the regions of Chiem Dong and Co Luy to the Vietnamese.<sup>56</sup>

Indravarman VI was the last ruler of the Champa mandala before it was dismembered by the Vietnamese. A period of civil war ensued after his death in 1441. Vietnamese invasions undertaken during the reigns of Le kings Nhan Tong and Thanh Tong brought about the final defeat of Vijaya in 1471. The Le dynasty (1427–1788) extended Dai Viet territory beyond Vijaya (Binh Dinh) into Kauthara's realm. The Vietnamese built colonies in Quang Nam and resettled their expanding populations in these places. Although 1471 is normally cited as the end of the Cham mandala, Tingley and Dharma argue that the mandala center had moved into Panduranga (Phan Rang), albeit weak and subjected to Vietnamese incursions, especially when the Nguyen lords established a base in the south, into the nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup>

Champa enjoyed a period of relative peace during the sixteenth century because of the power struggle between the Mac and the coalition of Le, Nguyen, and Trinh. However, at the end of the sixteenth century when the Le dynasty was restored, Champa experienced a new threat from the Nguyen lords, who left Thang Long to establish a new power base in the south.

The Nguyen family established a base in Thuan Hoa in 1558 when Nguyen Hoang was appointed governor by the Le court. In 1570 Nguyen Hoang added Quang Nam Province to his jurisdiction.<sup>58</sup> The Nguyen referred to their new region as Dang Trong (Inner Region) and the northern homeland as Dang Ngoai (Outer Region).<sup>59</sup> Dang Trong corresponded to Cochinchina and Dang Ngoai to Tonkin, where foreign merchants and visitors were increasingly numerous.

As the Nguyen consolidated their power, they began to entertain ideas of southward expansion. Cham relations with Vietnam since 1558 were entirely conducted with the Nguyen court, not Thang Long. From 1471 until the mid-seventeenth century, Champa with its new capital at Phan Thiet represented the southern limit of Dai Viet. The Cham of Panduranga continued to send tribute to the Le court until the Mac usurped power from the Le in 1526. Nguyen Hoang recognized the boundary, and while the Nguyen court since the restoration of the Le had assumed the role of the Viet court in relations with Champa, the Nguyen lords made no attempt to extend their territory into Cham land.

The Nguyen lords' decision not to extend their domain into Panduranga territory can be clarified by the study of incidents recorded in the Vietnamese chronicles. In 1611 a Cham force crossed the line which marked the southernmost extent of Vietnam to attack Phu Yen. Vietnamese forces drove them away but did not enter Cham territory.<sup>60</sup> This episode demonstrates the Nguyen lords' decision to honor the demarcation line established after the 1471 war.

Hoi An became an important commercial port in the sixteenth century onward called Faifo.<sup>61</sup> Initially, commercially licensed Japanese merchant vessels called *shuinsen* dominated the local economy.

In 1635 all Japanese were required to return to Japan following the imposition of the closed-door policy by the Shogunate. Chinese merchants then became the main traders at the port. The Portuguese and Dutch conducted profitable trade in Hoi An, especially during the wars between the Trinh and the Nguyen; Portuguese were the main suppliers of firearms. China and Japan used Hoi An as an offshore market during the period of official trade prohibition.<sup>62</sup>

The Nguyen lords in Quang Nam Province monopolized “all of the most valuable commodities”, in particular gold panned in the Truong Son mountain range.<sup>63</sup> The trade revenues from this and their access to commodities at the port allowed them to sustain their control of the Vietnamese south, especially after their last war with the Trinh in 1672, which resulted in a stalemate and divided Vietnam into two domains.

## HEIRS OF SRIVIJAYA AND MALAYU: PALEMBANG AND MELAKA

The first reference to the name “Palembang” is found in the ninth-century Chinese source *Xin Tangshu*. By the fourteenth century the Chinese called it *Qiu-jiang*, “Old Harbor”. Wang Dayuan in 1349 wrote that the inhabitants used rafts of bamboo instead of boats, and that many brick pagodas stood “along the roads”. He recorded that its soil was very fertile, and that Chinese merchants bought gharu wood, “cotton superior to that of any other foreign country”, beeswax, coarse laka-wood, and very big cranes’ crests. They sold beads, porcelain, copper cauldrons, colored cotton, water jars, and pots.<sup>64</sup>

Ma Guan wrote in the 1430s that *Qiu-jiang* “was anciently called San-fo-qi. It is also called *Po-lin-pang* and is under the rule of *Chao-wa*”. He recorded that many of the inhabitants came from Guangdong, Zhangzhou, and Quanzhou. “There is a great deal more water than land. The inhabitants are given to fighting on water. Only the dwellings of the highest officers are on the banks of the river, the people live scattered about on bamboo rafts tied to a root of a tree or a post, moving on a tidal stream with the rise and fall of the tide.” Chinese copper coins were used as currency.

Archaeological remains for the period between 1000 and 1300 are scarce in Palembang; Malayu was overlord of southeast Sumatra during that time, but Muara Jambi was abandoned by the end of the Late Classic period, possibly because of Javanese attacks. A fifteenth-century Siamese law book, the *Kot Mandirapala*, claims Malayu as a vassal of Ayutthaya. A Chinese source from 1618 mentions Jambi and states that “San-bo-tsai was formerly known as a rich place, but since it was conquered by Java, the capital has been deserted and few traders go there now”. In the Postclassic, Palembang resumed its status as the center of the Malay mandala of southeast Sumatra. After the death of Adityawarman, the link between the west Sumatran highlands and southeastern lowlands reverted to its earlier status as a sphere of economic interaction but political and cultural separation.

Excavations undertaken in Palembang in the early 1970s identified two large settlements: Air Bersih, which the archaeologists called a “town” covering 50 hectares during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and Geding Suro, a “city”, with an area of more than 150 hectares of dense remains, including brick and tiles, dating from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries.<sup>65</sup> Air Bersih corresponds to the period chronicled in the *History of the Ming Dynasty* and the *Ying-ya Sheng-lan*.<sup>66</sup>

According to Ming texts, Palembang was attacked by Majapahit in about 1391 in response to a Malay bid for autonomy, and the nobility fled to Temasek (Singapore). The Javanese appointed “a small chief to manage the trade” in Palembang, but there does not seem to have been an effective government, nor a significant Malay population. The Chinese community which may have amounted to 10,000 people remained there and elected one of themselves as their leader.<sup>67</sup>

On his first voyage in 1405, Zheng He appointed a local Chinese as governor of Palembang, with the official title “Pacifier of Old Port” conferred by Yongle himself. An office was set up in China especially to deal with the Palembang Chinese, who enjoyed a special status (somewhat analogous to the “one country, two systems” principle). The Chinese sent tribute to China in 1405 and 1406, in a similar manner to other Seasian kingdoms. He may have been deposed in 1407 by an accused pirate. In 1408 Zheng He went to Palembang, arrested the man, and installed another Palembang Cantonese as chief. Apparently this chief also had to pay tribute to Majapahit.

The name of Yongle’s special office to deal with Palembang, the “Pacification Commission”<sup>68</sup> suggests that the Palembang Chinese were a potential source of unrest. *Ying-ya Shenglan* describes Old Harbor as rich and prosperous.<sup>69</sup> There were “brick towers” on the shore. The Shi family who governed the port during the Yongle and Xuande eras (35 years) must have been redoubtable. They also sent missions to Ryukyu in 1406 and 1421. In 1428, 1429, and 1430, Ryukyu sent embassies and shiploads of porcelain and other products to Old Harbor. When the leader died in 1424, his daughter Shi Erjieh succeeded him. After she became ruler, “their tribute [to China] gradually became more rare.” Ryukyu archives show that she ruled until at least 1431. The respect which this lady inspired is reflected in their correspondence. In 1430 Ryukyu sent a letter addressed to “Your Ladyship, *Ben-mu-niang* (female chief) of Palembang, *San-fo-qi kuo*”.

She appears in Javanese legends as Pinatih; they say that she was the wife of the prime minister of *Sambaja*,<sup>70</sup> but was banished to Java for practicing sorcery.<sup>71</sup> She became the harbormaster of Gresik and the foster mother of one of the Nine Guardians (*Wali Songo*), Sunan Giri, who became a great proselytizer of Islam. Her tomb near that of Sunan Giri in east Java is still a pilgrimage site.

According to early Ming reports, Java had four large *kuo* (“capital, large town” or “district”<sup>72</sup> or “polity”).<sup>73</sup> Tuban *kuo* consisted of 1,000 families, many of whom came from Guangdong.<sup>74</sup> The second *kuo*, Gresik, said to have been founded by Chinese between 1350 and 1400, like Palembang was ruled by a Cantonese, and had more than 1,000 families. The third, Surabaya, had more than 1,000 families, including Chinese. From Surabaya travellers took small ships about 40 kilometers upriver, then went overland to the fourth *kuo*, the capital of Majapahit. Ma Guan said that every family there had a storeroom called *toko*; this word is the modern Indonesian word for commercial store or shop.<sup>75</sup>

When the Portuguese arrived in 1509, they did not find Chinese communities in Palembang or elsewhere in Southeast Asia except for Ayutthaya. After overseas Chinese communities were cut off from China, their leaders urged their people to assimilate to local culture.<sup>76</sup> In Zheng He’s time, overseas Chinese were already starting to change their names to local ones.<sup>77</sup> In 1515 the people of Palembang and Jambi were culturally Javanese.<sup>78</sup>

## Melaka

Temasik (Singapore) was attacked in about 1396 and its ruler, who was a refugee from Palembang, fled to the Malay Peninsula. In about 1400 he founded a new port at Melaka which quickly became the new center of the largest mandala in the southern Straits of Melaka. The early history of Melaka is murky; the first ruler of Melaka was probably named Parameswara, but the *Malay Annals* do not mention him. Instead, they call the founder of Melaka Iskandar Shah.<sup>79</sup> The *Malay Annals*, the most extensive chronicle about the rise of Melaka, was probably written around 1435 as a means of legitimizing the ruling group after the conversion to Islam.<sup>80</sup> It seems to have been written by a group who was in opposition to Parameswara and Malayu (Jambi).

Parameswara sent a mission to China in 1405. Zheng He's fleet visited him in 1409, and he visited China in 1411. The third Melaka ruler is recorded in Chinese texts as having borne the title Sri Maharaja, a non-Muslim title identical to that used in Srivijaya. He reigned until 1444. There is evidence that he converted to Islam, took the name Muhammad Shah, and went on missions to China in 1424 and 1431.

The oldest funerary inscription of Malaysia is dated 1442–1443, at Makam Diraja Kampung Langgar, Kedah. At Sayong Pinang, Johor, which became an important capital in the sixteenth century, are several tombstones of the second half of the fifteenth century. Some tombstones in Patani, southern Thailand, also were carved in the late fifteenth century.

The *Ying-ya Sheng-lan* states that in Melaka, "The king and the people are all Mahommedans", but Paul Pelliot believed that this information was added after 1433. Ma Guan's work was published with a postscript in 1451. The ruler in 1445 had the non-Muslim title Sri Parameswara Dewa Shah, but he may also have been a Muslim. In 1446 he was assassinated by a man who was clearly a Muslim. His father was Sri Maharaja; his mother may have been a Muslim concubine of Tamil ancestry born in Pasai. He took the title Sultan Muzaffar Shah and minted coins with Arabic inscriptions. By his reign Melaka had become the foremost trading port in Seasia, and was officially a Muslim sultanate. Subsequent rulers included Mansur Shah (1459–1477); during his reign, Old Malay inscriptions in Pengkalan Kempas near Melaka were carved, first in Kawi, then five years later in Arabic script adapted to Malay language. Another important surviving text from Melaka is the Melaka Legal Code (*Undang-Undang Melaka*), a large proportion of which is devoted to maritime law.

Later Melaka missions asked for Chinese help to defend themselves against Ayutthaya, but Melaka is cited in a fifteenth-century Ayutthaya text as a vassal. According to Tomé Pires, around 1490 Melaka had thrown off allegiance to Ayutthaya, and had supported in Pahang's successful endeavor to do the same. The northern parts of the Malay-speaking areas of the Siamo-Malay Peninsula, however, remained part of Ayutthaya's mandala.

The most extensive description of ancient Melaka dates from 1515. Estimates of the population vary; one of the lower figures cited is 40,000 to 50,000 people.<sup>81</sup> Pires said 84 languages were spoken there. The merchant community in Melaka consisted of about 4,000 people. Chinese were not listed among them. There were four harbormasters in Melaka: one for Gujaratis, the most numerous group with about 4,000 people. Another harbormaster represented people from India, Bago (Myanmar), and Pasai. The third represented people from the islands of Seasia: Java, Maluku, Banda, Palembang, Borneo, and

Luzon. The fourth harbormaster was responsible for people from the northeast: Ryukyu, Champa, and China. Chinese were probably small transient traders rather than permanent residents. In 1500, according to Chinese law, anyone caught building ships with more than two masts, or trading in foreign countries, would be executed. If someone chartered a ship going overseas, or imported more than about half a ton of sappanwood or pepper, they were banished to the frontier to serve as soldiers.<sup>82</sup>

Melaka probably handled much of the trade between China and Seasia. One island in the Pearl River estuary was designated as the docking point for ships from Melaka, another for ships from Siam.<sup>83</sup> In 1567, Emperor Muzong gave permission for 50 Chinese ships a year to sail to Seasia. New overseas Chinese communities began to form at this time.

The wealth of Melaka was proverbial even in Europe. “Whoever is Lord of Melaka has his hand on the throat of Venice”, according to a Portuguese saying. Melaka’s mandalas included the Siam-Malay Peninsula as far north as Kedah, and the east coast of Sumatra from Rokan and Rupat to Jambi. Melaka vied with Java for control of Palembang. No archaeological study of Melaka has yet been published. The city plan resembled Palembang and Singapore: The ruler lived on a hill symbolizing Mount Meru overlooking the estuary where trade took place. The sultan had a country estate. After the Portuguese conquest of Melaka, the Malay mandala became fragmented and was not reconstituted.

## POSTCLASSIC SANSKRITIC CULTURE IN JAVA

According to Javanese chronicles, Classic Indonesian culture was fated to meet its Armageddon in a great battle between Majapahit and Demak, its Islamic successor, in 1478 CE, which corresponds to *Anno Javanensis* 1400. The battle and its date are both apocryphal. In reality, the curtain descended gradually over Classic Indonesian culture, rather than falling abruptly. Majapahit still existed when the Portuguese arrived. The disappearance of Classic Indonesian culture, like its rise, was a complicated drama, enacted over a broad expanse of time and space, with numerous subplots, rather than a single dramatic event. There was no sudden decline, no dramatic disruption in Indonesian cultural evolution. Even the arrival of the Europeans had no rapid or major discernible effects. New economic and social conditions arising from a variety of factors exerted their influence over developments after 1500. Even Bali, which was the most unaffected by outside forces during the period 1500 to 1900 of the main centers of Indonesian classic culture, did not remain static; Balinese culture evolved significantly between the Majapahit period and the Dutch conquest of 1906, although Bali is the only surviving example of Brahmanical culture in Southeast Asia.

Few inscriptions from this period survive. They were mainly written on copper plates, which could easily be melted down. One of the longest Classic Indonesian inscriptions is found on 14 copper plates from east Java known as the Waringin Pitu inscription.<sup>84</sup> It consists of 34 Sanskrit verses which praise the family of Sri Maharaja Krtawijaya. Only a small number of inscriptions from east and central Java, including those from Candi Sukuh (1439 and 1457) and Ngadoman, Merbabu (1449), are known and they represent dead ends, not stages in the development of modern Javanese script. There is a long gap in the history of Javanese script between 1457 until 1600.<sup>85</sup>

## Chinese sources

Before his death in 1398, Emperor Hongwu appointed his nephew as his successor, but he was overthrown by his uncle, who took the reign name Yongle. In 1402 Yongle dispatched missions to eight countries, including Java. Between 1403 and 1406 Yongle received envoys from two Javanese kings: a Western King and an Eastern King. They seem to have been competing to control trade with China. In Javanese historiography, this is known as the period of division followed by civil war between Vikramavardhana (reigned 1389–1429) and Virabhumis which ended in 1406 when Virabhumis was beheaded. At that moment a Chinese envoy happened to be “passing through the region which had formerly been ruled by the Eastern King. The army which accompanied him [i.e., the envoy] landed to conduct trade [this in itself is a surprising piece of information], and 170 of them were killed by the army of the Western King”.<sup>86</sup> In 1407 Vikramavardhana sent a mission to China to apologize for this case of mistaken identity. Yongle pardoned him in return for payment of 60,000 *liang* (a unit of measure) of gold. In 1408 Vikramavardhana paid 10,000 *liang*; Yongle forgave the rest.

In the same year, Yongle became involved in relations between Brunei and Majapahit. An ambassador from Brunei came to China to report the death of Brunei’s king and to request that China recognize the crown prince as the new raja. After this request was granted, the Brunei ambassador complained that his kingdom was forced to send camphor as tribute to Java every year. Brunei asked that this practice be stopped because Brunei wanted to be a vassal of China instead. Yongle granted this request. Brunei then sent an ambassador to Majapahit to inform the king of this decision. We do not know how the Javanese received this embassy.

About 200 or 300 Chinese families lived in the capital at this time, as well as others in the kingdom’s ports of Gresik and Tuban. Ma Guan, one of Admiral Zheng He’s staff, visited Trowulan around 1420. He was a Muslim, and he said that all the Chinese who lived in Java were Muslim too.<sup>87</sup>

During the rest of the fifteenth century, Majapahit seems to have maintained a stable hold over at least the east Java region. Majapahit sent frequent missions to China until 1466, so that we have some information on the politics of east Java from Chinese sources. One mission which reached China in 1406 remained in China for 29 years. Between 1413 and 1443 Java sent 29 missions.

In 1413 the ruler of Melaka requested that China grant them authority over Old Port (Palembang). The request was not granted; the emperor reassured Vikramavardhana that Palembang was still technically part of Majapahit, even if the Old Port was ruled by Chinese.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the Chinese there were sending tribute to China.

Raja Vikramavardhana sent missions almost every year until he died in 1429. He was succeeded by his daughter Suhita (reigned 1429–1447), who sent nine missions to China. In 1443 Chinese officials complained that the cost of entertaining foreign envoys was too expensive and told them to come once every three years. Thereafter, Java sent fewer missions. Some Javanese envoys were natives of Fujian; in 1438 one of them asked permission to return to Fujian, while two others wished to build ancestral halls in their villages and return to Java.<sup>89</sup>

As the *Bakau* shipwreck attests, Chinese occasionally flouted the laws against private foreign trade. In 1444 Chinese records state that 55 people from Chaozhou in Guangdong illegally went to Java to



trade; some had “given their allegiance to Java”. In 1445 people from Fujian went to Java pretending to be official envoys. In 1501 people from Fujian persuaded a Javanese who had a permit to trade to let them use it, but the ruse was detected and the Fujian traders arrested.<sup>90</sup>

Queen Suhita died in 1447 and was succeeded by Krtavijaya, who reigned from 1447 to 1451. A mission from Java, which could have been sent by Suhita or Krtavijaya, reached China in September 1447. No other missions came to China from Java during Krtavijaya’s reign.

After Krtavijaya, Chinese records suggest that the next ruler, Rajasavarddhana, during his short reign (1451–1453) moved the capital of Majapahit from Trowulan to Kahuripan (precise location unknown). This may have been due to an eruption of Mount Kelud. Two Javanese missions arrived in China during this period. Another which arrived in September 1454 reported that they had been sent by Rajasavarddhana, probably just before he died. Chinese sources give little information about trade, but in 1452 some Javanese ambassadors who received ceremonial gifts asked permission to trade them for more useful items: iron nails and pots, and porcelain. The reference to metal and pottery replicates the contents of shipwrecks of this period.<sup>91</sup>

Hyang Purwawisesa ruled between 1456 and 1466, and sent two missions, one of which was marred by bad behavior. Ambassadors from Java and *Chang-he-xi* (an unknown kingdom) stayed at the same government rest house and became intoxicated; an altercation ensued, and the Javanese killed six of the *Chang-he-xi* men. The Javanese were not punished, but Raja Hyang Purwawisesa was told to punish them. In 1459 a Javanese came to offer tribute, apparently in a private capacity. He asked permission to stay at the capital and was assigned to look after the Emperor’s elephants.<sup>92</sup>

After 1466 Majapahit sent no missions for 30 years. Majapahit had several capitals in the late fifteenth century: Tumapel, Kediri, and Majapahit (location unknown). Some sources state that Rana-vijaya (King of Daha/Kediri) attacked Majapahit in 1478, possibly killing the ruler. In 1496 a mission from Girīndrawarddhana (reigned 1488–1527) arrived. This mission experienced ill fortune. Their ship was struck by a typhoon and more than 100 people drowned. The only object which was saved was a letter written on gold foil. The same misfortune afflicted another mission in 1499.

With this mission, the history of diplomatic relations between Majapahit and China came to an end. This record indicates that China viewed Majapahit as a country to be reckoned with during the fifteenth century. Unfortunately, we have almost no Javanese data to compare with the Chinese records.

The beginning and end of Chinese trade with Majapahit was well remembered among the Javanese. According to Tomé Pires in 1515:

They say that the Javanese used to have affinity with the Chinese, and one king of China sent one of his daughters to Java to marry Batara Raja Çuda, and that he sent her to Java with many people of China, and that he then sent money in the cash which are now currency, and they say that there was a junkload of them, and that that King was a vassal, not a tributary, of the king of China and that the Javanese killed all the Chinese in Java by treachery. Others say that it was not so, but that one king was never related to or knew the other, and that the Java cash were brought to Java for merchandise, because the Chinese used to trade in Java long before Malacca existed. But now they have not been there for the last hundred years.<sup>93</sup>

This story was known in Melaka in the early sixteenth century, when Girīndrawarddhana was still ruling. It is still well known in Melaka today. Parts of it are no doubt legendary, but the basic facts of the use of Chinese coinage and the involvement of the Mongol armada of 1293 in the foundation of Majapahit are confirmed by other sources.

The Portuguese came into contact with Majapahit as a result of their conquest of Melaka. According to Portuguese author Antonio Pigafetta (1522), Majapahit was only a city, not a kingdom, ruled by King Pati Unus.<sup>94</sup> The Portuguese were impressed by two items which indicate that late Majapahit was still a significant cultural entity. One of them was a map, which was described in detail by the Portuguese commander Afonso d'Albuquerque in a letter to the king of Portugal.<sup>95</sup> The second object was "a very long piece of cloth, whereon was painted a representation of the manner in which the King goes to battle . . . very beautifully depicted".<sup>96</sup>

### Temples and religion of the Postclassic period

The difficulty of devising a periodization scheme for ancient Indonesian art is illustrated by the coexistence of societies with traits diagnostic of different phases. For instance, in the Pakauman district in east Java not far from Late Classic temples, numerous burial sites consist of stone sarcophagi, associated with the late Preclassic era, ninth-century Chinese ceramics, and Chinese coins of the fifteenth century. Preclassic burial customs continued here long after they were abandoned in most areas. Societies such as Turunan of Bali, the Tengger of central Java, and the Badui of western Java still maintain Classic or Preclassic lifestyles and religious practices.

Archaism, the revival of practices or motifs characteristic of previous cultural configurations, renders meaningless any attempt to construct a simple unilinear narrative of Indonesian cultural evolution. Protohistoric terraced hillside shrines resembling prehistoric forebears have been found in several parts of west Java. The tradition of constructing such shrines emerged again at the end of the Classic period in east Java and perhaps in Bali as well, although it is uncertain whether the tradition in Bali was ever abandoned.

Postclassic statuary and reliefs seem to have been carved by craftsmen with little training. The only type of statuary which maintained a reasonable standard of quality consists of a group of images depicting a male usually assumed to be Bhima. Many such images were found at sacred edifices on upper slopes of mountains in east Java. He may have been popular among the *risi* groups. Part of Bhima's phallus is often shown exposed.

A statue of Bhima now in the Museum Mpu Tantular, Surabaya, bears an Old Javanese inscription on its back. It contains the word *pratistha* and a chronogram for 1351 CE. Old Javanese dictionaries give a variety of meanings for *pratistha*: foundation; holy place; calm; serenity; initiation; condition; position of subservience to something such as a monument, image, or temple; installation as a deity in a holy place, in which the deity can descend and take up abode. The latter seems to be the sense which was intended by the inscription.

## Penanggungan

The largest concentration of terraced shrines is found on Mount Penanggungan in east Java, where more than 80 sites have been identified, with inscriptions stretching over six centuries from 977 to 1511. Penanggungan's popularity may have stemmed from its form: a near-perfect cone flanked by four lesser peaks, suggestive of Mount Sumeru. The mountain is clearly visible from Trowulan. Sites on the mountain consist of a series of terraces, usually five, with stone facings and a stairway leading to three altar-like constructions on the uppermost terrace. At a few sites the terraces are faced with carved narrative reliefs.

## Lawu

In the fifteenth century a cult devoted to the character Bima, one of the five Pandawa brothers in the Mahabharata epic, was the main figure worshipped at mountain temples. His popularity may have derived from his role in a text called *Sudamala*, wherein he brings the dead back to life.

The most famous Postclassic terraced shrines, Candi Sukuh and Cetho, stand on the western slope of Mount Lawu (Figure 8.2). Several similar sites lie scattered within a few kilometers of Candi Sukuh, between elevations of 900 and 1410 meters. Many monuments are clustered around the summit, more than 3,000 meters high, the largest about 100 meters long and 20 meters wide. All are constructed of unworked boulders. The question remains unresolved as to whether these terraces represent a final stage in the devolution of pre-Islamic Javanese mountain terraces, or a prehistoric complex which survived unaltered. These sites reflect the continuing popularity of Javanese ideas of mountains as holy places and the importance of ascetics and hermits.

Inscriptions at Candi Sukuh date to the period between 1437 and 1457. On the floor of the entrance a graphic penis and vulva are carved. The site consists of three courtyards which rise in stepwise fashion from front to rear of the complex. On the upper terrace stand a number of structures, the principle one a flat-topped pyramid on which a large lingga once stood. This lingga is naturalistic, with the addition of four spheres which may represent bells intentionally inserted under the skin, a custom found in several Indonesian societies. The lingga also bears relief carvings of the Majapahit sunburst and a sword. A chronogram gives a date equivalent to 1440.

Other sculptures in the compound include a strange structure meant for channeling water through a trough, probably connected with the belief in the elixir of immortality. Scenes from the *Garudeya* and *Sudamala* are depicted, as well as a priest holding a *vajra* in either hand. A separate structure consists of a small platform, perhaps an altar, on which stands a relief depicting Bhima as a blacksmith. *Keris* makers occupied high status in ancient Indonesia.

Freestanding statues at the site include one dated 1442 and identified as Jatayu, who was killed by Rawana in the *Ramayana*. Another bears the date 1441 and an inscription. The significance of this text is uncertain. It has been theorized that Candi Sukuh was established by a dissident faction of the Majapahit court, which was defeated in 1437 and retreated to this area.



**Figure 8.2** Candi Sukuh

Candi Cetho once had 14 terraces. Freestanding statues include several images of Bhima. On the eighth terrace is a unique horizontal arrangement of stones depicting a stylized bat with its wings outstretched, a Majapahit sun in relief, various sea creatures, and a lingga to the shaft of which four spheres are attached like that from Candi Sukuh. The ensemble is aligned with the peak of Mount Lawu in the rear. The site is dated by inscriptions to 1468 to 1475.

Balinese literary works of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries use Middle Javanese language. A stone statue called *Kebo Edan*, “Crazy Buffalo”, has similar attributes to fifteenth-century Javanese images of Bhima.

## West Java

Ma Guan does not mention the kingdom of Pajajaran, but a few inscriptions in Old Sundanese dating from the fifteenth century have been found, including one from Tasikmalaya dated 1411, and five from Cirebon which mention a kingdom called Kawali. The grandfather of the founder of Pakuan Pajajaran may have had his palace at Kawali.

In 1690 Captain Adolf Winckelaer inspected “the old center of the Javanese, named Pakuan”, now Bogor. He found a site enclosed by a stone and earth rampart, within which was a stone on which were written eight and a half lines of characters, a tall round stone, two female images, and a statue of what he interpreted as a dog, within a ring of boulders. Other remains included a stone floor said to have been the former king’s house; a large, well-shaped stone (probably a ceremonial throne); and a large path planted with trees at regularly spaced intervals. In 1815 Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles noted the same remains.

Despite its distance from the coast, Pakuan Pajajaran could control the major communication routes of west Java from there. The north coast of west Java, including Banten, was subdued by Muslim forces from north-central Java in the early sixteenth century, but Pakuan did not fall to them until 1579.

## OTHER POSTCLASSIC SITES OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

### Sumatra: Aceh

The most important candidates for the title of early Islamic cities in Sumatra lie near the island’s northwestern corner. John Davis, who visited Aceh in 1599, wrote, “The citie of Aceh if it may be so called is very spacious. . . . I thinke the towne spreadeth over the whole land.” The settlement had no wall but was divided into segments called *gampung* (Malay *kampung*, “quarters”) for Chinese, Portuguese, Gujaratis, and Arabs. The *Hikayat Aceh* mentions Kampung Birma and Kampung Jawa; the first Dutch visitor, Cornelius de Houtman, heard of Kampung Pegu. In the late nineteenth century the palace was surrounded by *kampung*. The expansion of the settlement to the *dalam* apparently had taken place by 1700.<sup>97</sup>

### Aru

The kingdom of Aru, on the northeast coast of Sumatra, is first mentioned in 1282 when Kublai Khan ordered it to submit to him. In 1295 the brother of the ruler led a tribute mission to China.<sup>98</sup> The inhabitants were at least partially Islamicized during the fourteenth century.<sup>99</sup> Wang Dayuan in the fourteenth century mentioned it but did not describe it. Aru is known mainly from historical sources of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The *Malay Annals* implies that Aru was Islamicized at least as early as Samudera. The *Desavarnana* records that it was a vassal of Majapahit.

As in the case of Samudera Pasai, the location of Aru has yet to be ascertained. Historians have suggested several locations, from the mouth of the Barumun or Panai Rivers which lead to Padang Lawas, to the region of a bay north of Medan known as Aru Bay.<sup>100</sup> Possibly Aru controlled a stretch of coastline with more than one port. The *Mao Kun* map based on information gathered during the voyages of Zheng He encloses the name Aru in a rectangle, indicating that it is a country or region, not a settlement. Aru was a navigational landmark for Arab navigators on one of the two main routes through the Straits of Melaka, and is also mentioned in a Chinese text as a place which Chinese ships passed on the way to



the north end of the Straits of Melaka. Zheng He expeditions called at Aru's port after leaving Melaka on five of seven voyages.<sup>101</sup>

Ma Guan in the fifteenth century said that its territory was bounded by high mountains on one side, the sea on another, and Samudera on the north. He described its inhabitants as Muslims. Fei Xin, another officer on some of Zheng He's voyages, in his work *Xing-cha sheng-lan* recorded that Aru's soil was infertile. The kingdom's economic importance derived from forest products, including cranes' crests and camphor. In exchange the local inhabitants sought Chinese satins and silks, ceramics, and beads.

The Portuguese in the early sixteenth century heard that the inhabitants were cannibals, and that condemned criminals from Melaka had been sent there to be disposed of. Tomé Pires was highly impressed by Aru, calling its king "the greatest king in all Sumatra, and the most powerful in plundering raids. He is a Moor and lives in the hinterland and has many rivers in his country." Some of Aru's produce was exported via Barus, suggesting that Aru controlled a route across the island. Portuguese ships sometimes called at Aru, and Aru invited the Portuguese to join them in a military alliance against Aceh, but the Portuguese did nothing, and Aru's king was killed in 1539.<sup>102</sup>

One archaeological site may have been part of this kingdom: Deli Tua, on the west bank of the Deli River, 30 kilometers from the modern port of Belawan at an elevation of 50 meters, where the land begins to rise and the river is no longer navigable. The main features of the site are two large earthwork fortifications 1.2 kilometers apart, both located on near-vertical sections of river bank which formed natural defenses. One fortification is 150 by 60 meters. Surface survey yielded earthenware and porcelain sherds. In between the two forts and at the other fortification is a large enclosure which measured 300 square meters (9 hectares). A survey there yielded late Song, Yuan, and Ming ceramics, fifteenth-century stoneware from both Sukhothai and Sawankhalok, and much earthenware. The site is now (2015) rapidly being encroached upon by the growing urban site of Medan, and will soon be completely destroyed. The Deli River was probably an important economic zone of the Postclassic era. It lies in the same general area as Kota Cina. This region may have played a significant role in the early Islamization of the archipelago, because of its location near the north end of the Straits of Melaka, where numerous natural resources were available.<sup>103</sup>

## Borneo (Brunei)

Names resembling "Brunei" are found in Chinese sources going back to the Tang dynasty (late seventh century), the Song dynasty (the *Song Shi* of 977 and *Zhu-fan-zhi* of Zhao Rugua, 1225), and the *Desavarnana* of 1365, but not all need to have referred to the location of the modern sultanate. The name "Brunei" gave us the English word for the whole island of Borneo. The oldest ceramics in the sultanate date from the Song, so there is evidence for an important settlement here by the thirteenth century. The first Brunei ruler to convert to Islam may have done so in 1514 or 1515, according to Portuguese sources. It is possible, however, that some of his locally born subjects had converted much earlier.<sup>104</sup> This same process in which the merchant class converted first and the ruler later also occurred in Champa.<sup>105</sup>



The tombstone of “Master Pu”, believed to have been a Chinese Muslim immigrant, dated 1264 CE, found in Brunei, is more than 150 years older than any other Muslim tombstones in the Sultanate. It is 33 years older than the tombstone in Samudera Pasai. There may not have been a Muslim community in Brunei in the thirteenth century, however. About 40 tombstones are known from Brunei with dates between 1402 to 1563, thus the Postclassic era; 19 of them have Malay as well as Arabic language inscriptions, which is strong evidence in favour of the conclusion that they were locally born. A man named Husyn died in AH 828 (Anno Hijrah, equivalent to 1424 CE) and was buried on Luba Island in the Brunei River. A seventeenth-century sultan of Brunei, Kamaluddin, asked to be buried beside him, in the belief that he was the first principal locally born proselytizer. It is possible, as some scholars have speculated, that Islam entered Brunei from China. An undated tombstone found in the Brunei Museum refers to “the late martyr Sultan” who “was called Maharaja Bruni”. The original location of the stone is unknown. It has been suggested that the stone was imported from Quanzhou in the fourteenth century, because there are 12 gravestones from the time and place with similar decoration,<sup>106</sup> but the more likely explanation is that Islamic influences came from a variety of sources, including China, India, and the Near East.<sup>107</sup>

## ISLAM IN JAVA

The term *wali songo* has become common in Indonesian to describe the Nine Saints (although “guardians” would be a better translation), semi-legendary figures who are credited with bringing Islam to Java. The list of the nine people (mostly men, but sometimes including a woman, Ratu Kalinyamat, whose tomb is beside the Masjid Mantingan, near Jepara, central Java) varies from place to place. The significance of the number nine is one of the points of continuity between pre-Islamic Javanese culture and the traditions which legitimized the conversion to Islam. The conversion began slowly, in the fourteenth century, mainly in the north coastal strip termed the *pesisir* where many ports large and small had long existed, and where communities of foreigners probably existed since the Protoclassic. During the Majapahit era some Javanese, perhaps of high status, were converted to Islam, but the major wave of conversion in which the majority of Javanese rice farmers in the hinterland, the *pedalaman*, embraced Islam, took place in the sixteenth century. Despite the relatively recent nature of this conversion, we have few historical sources other than inscriptions and chronicles with which to trace this process. The Nine Saints shared some characteristics; many were wandering teacher-traders. Some, it is hinted, were Chinese; others may have had Indian, Persian, or Arab ancestry. The tombs of the Walis have become major pilgrimage destinations. Many are on hills, perpetuating the pre-Islamic perception of a connection between ancestors, supernatural spiritual power, and high places. At least one, the tomb of Ratu Kalinyamat, is built on the ruins of a pre-Islamic temple. At the core of Javanese mysticism is a belief that each human being contains a portion of divinity. This belief is said to have been taught by some Walis, for instance, by Sunan Kali Jaga to Sunan Pandan Arang.<sup>108</sup> Conventional Islamic theology would reject such an idea.

In addition to the Nine Guardians, other saintly figures are also given prominent roles in the chronicles. One of these, Sunan Pandan Arang, is portrayed in chronicles as the last king of Majapahit who

was defeated by the Muslim army of Demak. He then met one of the Walis, Sunan Kali Jaga, and they agreed that their messages were basically the same, just couched in different language. He became a Muslim, wandered into the hinterland, performing miracles along the way, and engaging in competitions with local teachers of Javanese religion whom he defeated with his mystical powers and converted to Islam.

Some scholars<sup>109</sup> have worked with difficult sources which combine information of historical value with myths and legends, applying standard historical techniques to them in an attempt to acquire evidence for the existence and dates of these figures. Unfortunately, we possess few contemporary sources for the middle and latter parts of the fifteenth century, when many of these figures were supposedly active.<sup>110</sup>

It seems that Pandan Arang's great-grandfather was a locally born Chinese (*peranakan*) from Gresik, on the northeast coast of Java. His son, Pandan Arang's grandfather, may have converted to Islam. Pandan Arang's grand-uncle may have been Sultan Trenggana, who ruled Demak during its period of greatest power during which Majapahit vanished from history in 1527. In about 1530 one of the Nine Saints, Sunan Kudus, led an army from Demak which conquered Pengging, the last non-Islamic kingdom in central Java.<sup>111</sup>

A Javanese chronicle of this period, *Serat Kandha*, is known from a manuscript copied in the eighteenth century, but contains data probably recorded in the sixteenth century.<sup>112</sup> It reports that Pandan Arang left on his journey to Tembayat in 1512, which was then part of Pengging, a vassal of Majapahit. Hayam Wuruk, the greatest king of Majapahit, had visited the area in the mid-fourteenth century. Pengging is described as having had a large number of mystics who set up *mandalas*, or religious communities, loosely affiliated with Hindu philosophy but which did not have temples or statues. The governor of Pengging died in the battle at which Majapahit was finally destroyed by forces of Demak under Sultan Trenggana in 1527. Sultan Trenggana is mentioned in Portuguese reports of this period. He appears to have been quite war-like; he was eventually killed in battle in east Java in 1546, as was his successor Sunan Prawata, in 1549, by a man who was in turn killed by Jaka Tingkir, grandson of the former king of Pengging. Jaka Tingkir then became Sultan Adiwijaya of Pengging and established his capital at nearby Pajang, which became the most powerful kingdom in Java. These frequent twists and turns of history obviously made it difficult for contemporaries to figure out what was going on. The *Serat Kandha* contains many more colorful stories of political events in the sixteenth century, many of which may well be true. The Portuguese were certainly aware that the state of the island was in disarray, and warfare was frequent. It seems that the mystical religious communities of the Pengging/Pajang/ Tembayat area, whether Muslim or Hindu, constituted a powerful source of opposition to central authority until the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>113</sup>

At the tomb complex of Sunan Tembayat, near Klaten, central Java, inscriptions record that the site was renovated by Adiwijaya, the king of Pajang, in 1566, which demonstrates that this complex had become a popular pilgrimage place by that time.<sup>114</sup> There is no way to confirm the date of his death, but it is believed to have been around 1537.<sup>115</sup> His tombstone is reported to be decorated with a sunburst motif like that used on the early Islamic tombstones at Traloyo, Trowulan. Tombstones with this motif have been termed the Demak-Troloyo type. They are found over a broad area of east Java, including

Demak, Bangkalan (on the island of Madura), and as far east as Lombok. They continued to be made until the eighteenth century.<sup>116</sup>

Sunan Tembayat's tomb lies on a hill overlooking a large area of central Java (Figure 8.3). In this respect it resembles the nearby royal tomb complex of Imogiri, which was founded in the eighteenth century. It may be the first of this type of burial ground to have been constructed in the central Javanese



**Figure 8.3** Tembayat

hinterland. The tomb complex occupies a narrow ridge which crowns its hillock. Whether for this reason or because of cosmological intent, the complex has an axial format similar to the Postclassic temples of Sukuh and Cetho on Mount Lawu. It is divided into three courtyards by *candi bentar* (gates and walls), in front of which are spirit walls, or *kelir*. These are not found at Sukuh or Cetho, but such a structure is found at the later tomb complex of Senapati at Kota Gede, Yogyakarta, as well as in Balinese courtyards. The estate of the nineteenth-century rebel Diponegoro, on the outskirts of Yogyakarta, has a spirit wall.

One can note many other instances of continuity between Late Classic and Postclassic architecture. A full study of Postclassic art in Indonesia has yet to be conducted. The figure of the ascetic was still an important concept, representing continuity with the Preclassic period, but Javanese artists created original ways of implying their presence without actually showing them, such as depicting gardens with meditation pavilions on mountains.<sup>117</sup> The question of Southeast Asia's Islamic art has not been seriously addressed. The *pesisir* style of Java from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, with its numerous references to pre-Islamic Javanese art and incorporation of Near Eastern, Indian, and Chinese motifs, has great potential for future research.<sup>118</sup> Another interesting question concerns the role of Chinese Muslims (or perhaps it is better to say Muslims from China, since many of them had ancestors of Uighur or other non-Han groups) in the dissemination of Islam to Southeast Asia. By the time of the Zheng He voyages of the early fifteenth century, several ports on the north coast of Java included several thousand Muslim Chinese in their populations. Several of the semi-legendary *wali songo*, or Nine Guardians, are believed to have had Chinese ancestors.<sup>119</sup>

In Java, according to Ma Guan, the Muslim communities comprised "people from every foreign kingdom in the West who have flowed to this place as merchants", and people from China who had "fled away and now live in this country", in other words, non-Javanese. They were mainly located in three ports along the north coast: Tuban, Gresik, and Surabaya, and the capital city of Majapahit in the hinterland. The local people he described scornfully as "very ugly and strange", and "devoted to devil worship", in other words non-Muslim.

## Postclassic Islamic sites: Java

### Gresik

Gresik, a fifteenth-century port, is located 15 kilometers south of the mouth of the Solo River, on the coast of east Java. Ma Guan said that "Anciently it was a mud flat. Chinese visited it and settled down there in numbers. . . . It counts over a thousand families and its chief is (or its chiefs are) from Kuang-tung."<sup>120</sup> It was both an early settlement of overseas Chinese and an important early Muslim economic mercantile center.

### Tuban

Tuban was the major port of Majapahit during the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. It was an important node in the trading network which funneled spice from eastern Indonesia to mainland Asia,

and hosted a large community of foreign merchants. Many pieces of Chinese porcelain have been recovered from the harbor. Tuban is also regarded as one of the first places in Java to convert to Islam. The tomb of Sunan Bonang, one of the *wali songo*, or nine saints credited with bringing Islam to Java, is found here.

### Demak

The Muslim kingdom of Demak, in north-central Java, was the main Islamic opponent of the Portuguese after their capture of Melaka in 1511. Javanese chronicles, in particular the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, claim in millenarian fashion that Islam defeated adherents of pre-Islamic Javanese religion in a climactic battle in AJ 1400 (Anno Javanensis, equivalent to 1478 CE), when Raden Patah, ruler of the port of Bintara, established the kingdom of Demak. Raden Patah was said to be the son of Brawijaya, ruler of Majapahit, and a Chinese princess. When she was pregnant, she was given to Aria Damar, ruler of Palembang. Raden Patah ruled until 1513 and is recorded in Portuguese sources. Brawijaya VII, the last ruler, is said to have undergone *moksha*, dematerialization, after his defeat, and became the ruling spirit of Mount Lawu. The same sources place great emphasis on stories of the *Wali Songo*, or “Nine Saints”, who are credited with miracles such as building the mosque of Demak in one night (Figure 8.4).



Figure 8.4 Masjid Agung Banten Lama



## Melaka's successor: Banten Lama

The *Sajarah Banten* is the major chronicle which describes the founding of Banten (which in Europe has become known as Bantam). The chronicle begins with the kingdom of Pajajaran.<sup>121</sup> Maulana Hasanuddin and his father, the *wali* Sunan Gunung Jati, take a journey via Banten Girang to a mystical mountain, Pulosari in the south of Sunda, where 800 Hindu-Buddhist priests lived. Maulana Hasanuddin meditated on the mountains of Pulosari, Karang, and Lor, before his father returned home, leaving Hasanuddin at Banten. The leader of the 800 priests disappeared (a possible reference to the pre-Islamic concept of *moksha*, or corporal dematerialization), Hasanuddin became their leader. Together they sought a place to conduct a (ritual) cockfight; they were joined by two chiefs from Pakuwan (the palace of Pajajaran), who converted to Islam. Hasanuddin then conquered Banten Girang, where he settled after sending the 800 priests back to Pulosari. Later he was called to attend a conclave of the nine *wali* at Cirebon, and while there he was betrothed to the daughter of the Sultan of Demak. While awaiting the propitious moment for the wedding, the Raja of Majapahit attacked but was defeated and his kingdom destroyed. Hasanuddin was then installed as Raja of Banten.

He continued his efforts to convert the population of Banten to Islam, and had two sons and a daughter by the Sultan of Demak's daughter. Later, Sunan Gunung Jati came to visit him and instructed him to build a city on the coast; he specified the proper place for the market, the palace, and the public square. The unbelievers in the interior of the country should be subjugated, and a meditation site built on Gunung Pinang. Hasanuddin then attacked and destroyed Pakuan. Hasanuddin was eventually succeeded by his son, who built a fort constructed dams, canals, and rice fields; and encouraged settlements.

There is no record of Demak's motive for attacking Sunda; perhaps it was done partly to forestall the Portuguese intention to occupy that coast, partly through the attraction of the site's proximity to increasingly strategic pepper-producing territories. Demak's agents were also busy in Banjarmasin, south Borneo, another pepper-producing territory, which involved both the spread of Islam and the attempt to impose some form of temporal overlordship. They probably desired to portray themselves as recreators of Majapahit, while also proselytizing for Islam.

In 1515 Demak's situation was critical. Many men had been lost in an attack against the Portuguese in 1512 or 1513. Demak was also constantly at war with Tuban. The ruler Tranggana took the Islamic title Sultan in about 1524 on the suggestion of his adviser, Sunan Gunung Jati.<sup>122</sup> Sultan Tranggana was killed in battle in 1546; Demak then sank into insignificance.

The north coast of Sunda was subdued relatively quickly, but Pajajaran at Pakuan did not fall to Islamic Banten until 1579. Da Barros described the Sunda people before their conversion as unwarlike; "they spend their time praying to their gods. They have many temples to pray to these gods."<sup>123</sup> Da Barros did not visit Indonesia, so we cannot determine the reliability of his characterization; archaeologists have not found any traces of temples, but perhaps they were made of perishable materials.

A few traces of pre-Islamic settlement have been found at Old Banten, including a statue of Siva's bull, Nandi,<sup>124</sup> plus sherds of fifteenth-century Thai pottery. On the southern limit of the old city, Kera-denan has yielded obsidian artifacts, suggesting that the site may have been inhabited much earlier.



Substantial pre-Islamic remains existed on the western and southwestern outskirts of the town of Serang, 10 kilometers inland, including a complex of earthworks, and ceramics of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.<sup>125</sup> The *Sajarah Banten* states that Sunan Gunung Jati visited Banten Girang on his visit to west Java. Raffles heard Girang described as “the ancient capital, . . . of which the ruins are still visible”.<sup>126</sup> In 1815 Banten consisted of 12 villages with 5,699 people; Serang had 42 villages and 19,793 people.<sup>127</sup> This pattern of settlement wherein the population is concentrated some distance inland, rather than on the coast, probably resembles that of the early sixteenth century.

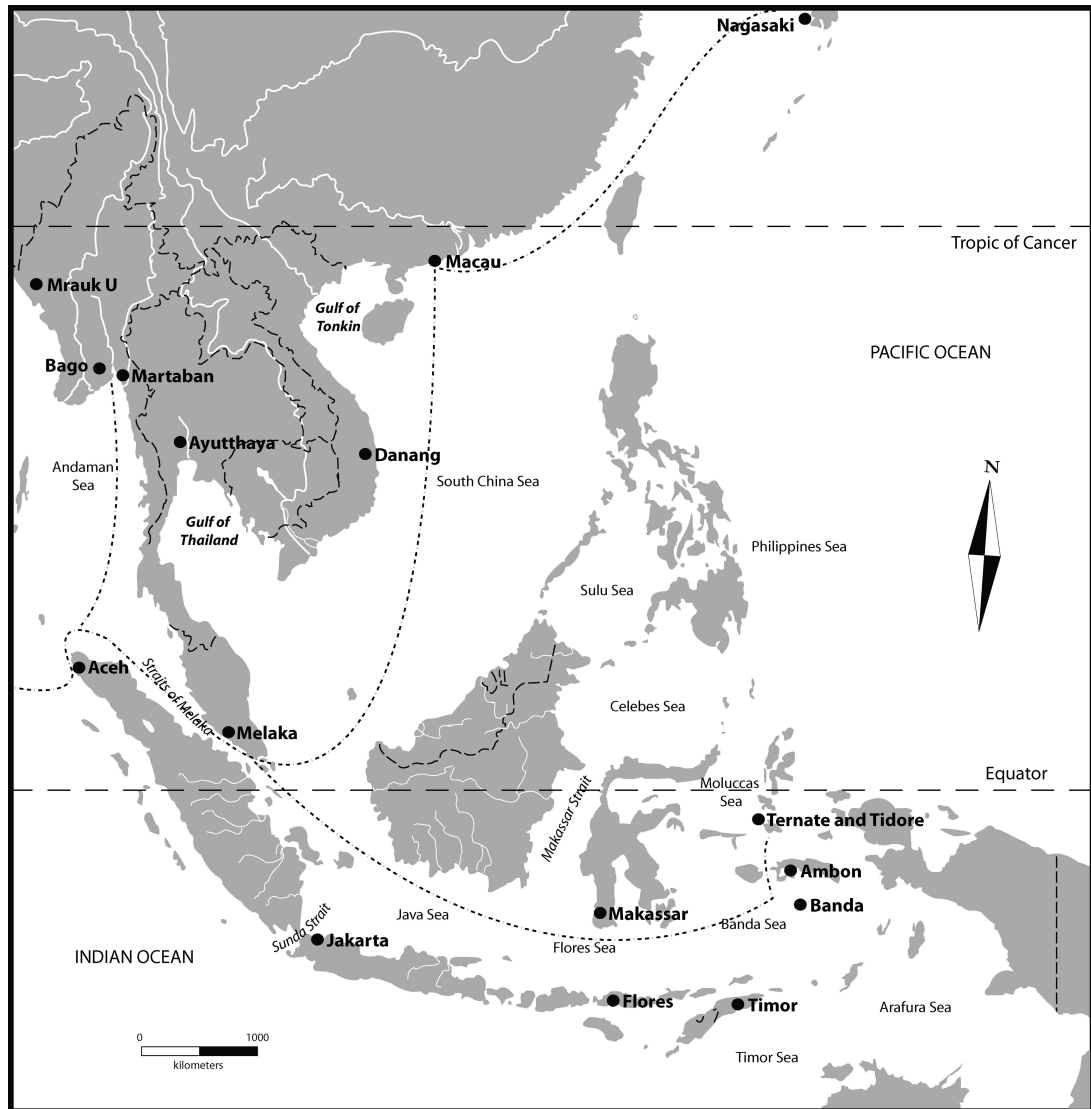
Under Muslim rule, Banten became the primary port in west Java. By the end of the century it was the principal port in western Indonesia, mainly because of the growing trade in pepper. Maulana Hasanuddin reigned as Banten’s raja until 1570. His successor, Maulana Yusuf, reigned until 1580, and expanded Banten’s territory. Yusuf was succeeded by Maulana Muhammad, who ruled for 16 years, until his life was cut short precisely when Banten was about to experience new challenges from overseas. In early 1596 Banten launched an attack against Palembang. The motive behind the attack is unclear. While aboard his ship at anchor in the Musi River, he was struck and instantly killed by a chance shot from a cannon. The Banten fleet sailed home. Muhammad’s son and successor, Abdulkadir, was only five months old at the time. This necessitated a period of regency with accompanying intrigues and rivalry at the very time when unity and decisive leadership would have been most necessary, for the first Dutch fleet arrived in Banten in that year.

Excavations at Banten Girang have yielded Chinese ceramics of the eleventh through fifteenth centuries.<sup>128</sup> Many excavations have been conducted at Banten Lama, but no overall report has been published.<sup>129</sup>

## ARRIVAL OF EUROPEANS

The historiography of the sixteenth century is important because a new set of data became available in the form of European observations. The Portuguese arrived in the region near the beginning of the century, and the archives in Lisbon are still being mined for data on Seasia. Archaeological study of the sixteenth century has been pursued in some areas of Seasia, particularly in Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. In these three areas, developments during the sixteenth century parallel but do not duplicate the North American experience of colonization, which began at exactly the same time. In sixteenth-century Thailand, the kingdom of Ayutthaya was little affected by European contact. The Portuguese graveyard there has been investigated by archaeologists. In Java, although the Portuguese visited the island, the sixteenth century coincides with the expansion of Islam, and is therefore subsumed under Islamic archaeology in Indonesian periodization. Other than a stone *padrao*, the Portuguese left few tangible traces of their presence there (Figure 8.5).

The Portuguese behaved much like the other trading kingdoms of Seasia. They were content to control a few strategic points along sailing routes; they did not try to conquer the hinterlands which produced the spices which originally brought Seasia to their attention. Early European accounts of Seasia emphasize economic conditions and affairs. Their picture of Seasia stresses the importance of



**Figure 8.5** Portuguese outposts and sailing routes, sixteenth century

commerce as a major motivating factor, which explains many actions and decisions by Seasians. Some historians, however, have argued that the image of Seasia these sources depict is distorted, because the Portuguese were only interested in commerce, and therefore did not bother to notice other factors which were more important to Seasians themselves in determining why they took certain decisions. Ideas about what made the people in the region act the way they did would have been inevitably influenced by this perspective. They would have seen a lot of merchants, but not many farmers, who still formed the vast majority of the population.

In Malaysia, the Portuguese destroyed the Melaka sultanate in 1511, but little historical archaeology has been carried out there. The refugee Malay court spent the rest of the century attempting to re-establish itself in the southern part of the Malay Peninsula in the face of unrelenting pressure from both the Portuguese and local rivals. The Spanish first visited the Philippines in 1521 under Magellan (a Portuguese), but only began to create an imprint on the archipelago in the 1570s. The Spanish quickly established Christianity there, and the search for early Christian sites is one of the more popular pursuits undertaken by Philippine archaeologists. The Spanish were interested in territorial conquest, but they chose the most peripheral area of Seasia to take. The Spanish did fight some battles in the late sixteenth century in Cambodia, the Moluccas, and west Java, but did not win any major victories. The Spanish were interested in the Philippines mainly because it gave them a useful base for trade with China and Japan, rather than its links with Seasia.

One of the most powerful sultanates in Seasia, Brunei, was an important trading center but was not seriously affected by foreign forces. In Cambodia, the sixteenth century was also an unsettled period, marked by a brief transfer of the capital back to Angkor and the addition of some reliefs to Angkor Wat as well as the arrival of various foreign adventurers, but again their archaeological or cultural footprints at this stage were evanescent. In Myanmar, Portuguese adventurers contributed to some destabilizing events in Arakan and the Ayeyarwadi Delta. They also traded with Bago and Mottama (Martaban). They left few identifiable Portuguese objects in the region.

The Iberians lent some new words to the local language for such introduced artifacts as chairs and tables, but the European advent had no significant effect on the political and economic institutions of sixteenth-century Seasia. The Portuguese were small in number and, bereft of significant support from the motherland, were eventually absorbed into Seasia rather than significantly altering it. More important factors deriving from Seasia's connectivity with the rest of the world were the expansion of Islam and the revival of Chinese trade, particularly after 1567.

Colonialism originally meant nothing more than the establishment of a population of a particular type which migrated from one area to occupy space in the midst of a different population. Thus we speak of plants colonizing newly disturbed habitats. Early colonies of merchants from Uruk (southern Mesopotamia) in Anatolia were there on the sufferance of the local population, not established by force.<sup>130</sup> Whereas the Portuguese occupied Melaka and other Muslim ports through violence, their enclaves in other parts of Seasia, such as Ayutthaya and China, were marginal and part of the established pattern of foreign traders occupying ground set aside for them by the local rulers, to whom they were clearly subordinate. "The mixed character of colonial populations, in which elements of settler and local culture combined to shape a distinct cultural entity, has suggested that hybridity and ambiguity more accurately characterize colonial relations."<sup>131</sup>

The main objective of Portuguese exploration since the early fifteenth century had been to outflank the Venetians and go directly to the sources of spices in Seasia. The wealth from that source had generated great glory for Venice. By cutting out the middlemen, the Portuguese envisioned much greater glory as well as power. Vasco da Gama succeeded in establishing the location of the southern tip of Africa in 1498, just a few years after Christopher Columbus, embarking on the same quest, thought that he had reached India by going in the opposite direction. In 1509 the Portuguese in a sudden stroke

defeated a combined fleet of Egyptian and Gujerati ships at Diu, and in 1511 took Melaka. By 1530 they were able to compel the Sultan of Ternate 3,000 kilometers farther east to pay tribute in cloves. The Portuguese never succeeded in building any bases between these two extremes of Seasia.

One indirect effect of European colonialism on the Seasian economy was the import of South American silver by the Spanish. After Legaspi conquered Cebu in 1565, Urdaneta discovered the westerly winds, which provided a reliable way of sailing to Acapulco, and Spanish-Mexican silver coins began to circulate in Seasia. Many of the coins were melted down by metal-hungry Seasians to make jewellery, but some of it remained in the form of coins and provided important lubrication for exchange mechanisms for centuries.

The potential for the archaeological study of European interaction with Seasia rises rapidly at the end of the Postclassic period. The English East India Company was founded in 1600, and the United East India Company of the Netherlands was formed in 1602. In the same year Dutch ships defeated the Portuguese in a battle off Banten. The potential of seventeenth-century archaeology to illuminate interaction between Seasians and foreigners is significant.

## NOTES

- 1 Reid 1988, 1992.
- 2 Coedès 1964: 12.
- 3 Geertz 1980.
- 4 Reid 1988: 18.
- 5 Reid 2015: 102.
- 6 On the early Ming voyages, see Miksic 2013; Wolters 1970; Wade 1991, 1994, *Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-lu*: an open access resource.
- 7 Kobata and Matsuda 1969.
- 8 Cortesao 1944.
- 9 Harrison 1958; Ho and Smith 1999.
- 10 Brown 2009.
- 11 For example, Junker 1999.
- 12 Lam 2001: 35.
- 13 Brown and Sjostrand 2000.
- 14 Flecker 2001b.
- 15 Brown and Sjostrand 2000: 52.
- 16 Manguin 1983.
- 17 Diem 2001.
- 18 Brown 2010.
- 19 Bound 2001: 101–103; Guy 2000.
- 20 Brown 2010.
- 21 L'Hour 2001: I, 38.
- 22 Wade 1991: 77.
- 23 Crick 2001.
- 24 Chandler 2008: 91. More than 1,000 inscriptions were erected before 1300 compared with fewer than 100 in the years following the beginning of the sixteenth century.

- 25 Giteau 1997: 116.
- 26 Miksic 2007: 19.
- 27 Vickery 2004: 9–10, 25–26, 42–59; Wolters 1966b: 86.
- 28 Chandler 2008: 93.
- 29 Giteau 1997: 116.
- 30 On sixteenth-century Cambodia, see Groslier 2006, Giteau 1997: 116–121.
- 31 Giteau 1997: 121.
- 32 Lieberman 2003.
- 33 Chandler 2008: 105.
- 34 Schweyer 2011: 37.
- 35 Whitmore 2013: 9.
- 36 Nguyen-Long 2013: 73.
- 37 Tong 2011: 50–59.
- 38 Nguyen-Long 2013: 73.
- 39 Schweyer 2011: 37.
- 40 *Toan Thu*, quoted in Whitmore 2013: 9–10.
- 41 Sun 2006: 91–3, Pham 2004: 42–7; Lam 1997: 143, footnote 1.
- 42 Schweyer 2011: 38.
- 43 Whitmore 2013: 10.
- 44 Schweyer 2011: 39.
- 45 Whitmore 2013: 1.
- 46 Sun 2006: 100–105.
- 47 Nguyen-Long 2013: 86.
- 48 Misugi 1981.
- 49 Tingley 2009: 15.
- 50 Miksic 2009: 87–91; Flecker 2009: 41–44.
- 51 Whitmore 2013: 13.
- 52 Nguyen-Long 2001: 93.
- 53 Nguyen-Long 2001: 99.
- 54 Whitmore 2013: 13.
- 55 Nguyen-Long 2001: 99–100.
- 56 Le 2003: 26–38; Wong 2011: 241.
- 57 Tingley 2009: 10–11.
- 58 Wong 2011: 242.
- 59 Nguyen-Long 2001: 156.
- 60 Wong 2011: 243.
- 61 Nguyen 1994: 129–137.
- 62 Wheeler n.d.: 4.
- 63 Tingley 2009: 15.
- 64 Rockhill 1914.
- 65 Bronson and Wisseman [Christie] 1976.
- 66 Groeneveldt 1960: 69–73; Mills 1970: 98–100; cf. Wolters 1970.
- 67 Wolters 1970: 71–73.
- 68 Kobata and Matsuda 1969: 131–132.
- 69 Mills 1970: 99.
- 70 Sanfoqi according to Tan Yeok Seong 1975.
- 71 Raffles 1978/1817: Volume II, pages 115, 119.
- 72 Mills 1970: 90.

- 73 Wolters 1986: 17.
- 74 Mills 1970: 89.
- 75 Mills 1970: 86–90.
- 76 Ma 2002.
- 77 Kobata and Matsuda 1969: 151, 153.
- 78 Cortesao 1944: I, 154–155.
- 79 Miksic 2010, 2013; Wolters 1970; Wang 1968.
- 80 Brown 1970.
- 81 Meilink-Roelofs 1962: 339, footnote 11.
- 82 Chang 1983: 49.
- 83 T'ien 1981: 34.
- 84 Boechari 1985–86: 126–135; Stutterheim 1938: 118 f.; Damais 1952: 80.
- 85 de Casparis 1975: 65.
- 86 Geoff Wade, translator, *Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-lu*.
- 87 Mills 1970: 91; Rockhill 1914: 242.
- 88 Geoff Wade, translator, *Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-lu*.
- 89 Wade 1991: 53.
- 90 Wade 1991: 54–55.
- 91 Wade 1991: Appendix, 77.
- 92 Wade 1991: 55.
- 93 Cortesao 1944: 179.
- 94 S. Sartono and Bandono 1995.
- 95 Earle and Villiers 1990: 149.
- 96 Birch 1875–1884, Vol III: 160–161.
- 97 Lombard 1969: 41, 113, 128.
- 98 Wolters 1970: 44, 209, note 51.
- 99 Milner, Edwards McKinnon, and T.L. Sinar 1978.
- 100 Miksic 1979: 47.
- 101 Tibbetts 1971: 492; Rockhill 1915: 141, 145; Mills 1970: 114–115.
- 102 Cortesao 1944: I, 148; Dion 1970; Kathirithamby-Wells 1969 456, note 14, 460.
- 103 Miksic 1979 230–235.
- 104 Nicholl 1979: 179.
- 105 Manguin 1985.
- 106 Chen Dasheng 1992.
- 107 Frank and Chen 1973, Pengiran Karim bin Pengiran Haji Osman 1993.
- 108 Guillot 2002: 143.
- 109 For example, Rinkes 1996.
- 110 De Graaf and Pigeaud 1974.
- 111 Guillot 2002: 147.
- 112 De Graaf and Pigeaud 1985: 14.
- 113 Guillot 2002: 158–159.
- 114 De Graaf and Pigeaud 1985: 69.
- 115 Guillot 2002: 144.
- 116 Hasan Ambary 1998: 65.
- 117 Miksic 2005.
- 118 For considerations which should be taken into account in mapping Java in Islamic art, see Shalem 2012.
- 119 De Graaf and Pigeaud 1984.
- 120 Mills 1970: 90.



- 121 Djajadiningrat 1983: 260.
- 122 Pigeaud and de Graaf 1976: 3–8.
- 123 Djajadiningrat 1983: 84.
- 124 Bosch 1918: 5.
- 125 Mundardjito et al. 1978.
- 126 Raffles 1817: II, 133.
- 127 Ibid.: p. 244.
- 128 Dupoizat 1992.
- 129 Naniek Harkantiningsih 1986; Ambary, Michrob, and Miksic 1988.
- 130 Stein 2002.
- 131 Lyons and Papadopoulos 2002: 7. A recent study of Banten which falls outside of the period discussed in this book is Ueda (2015).



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